

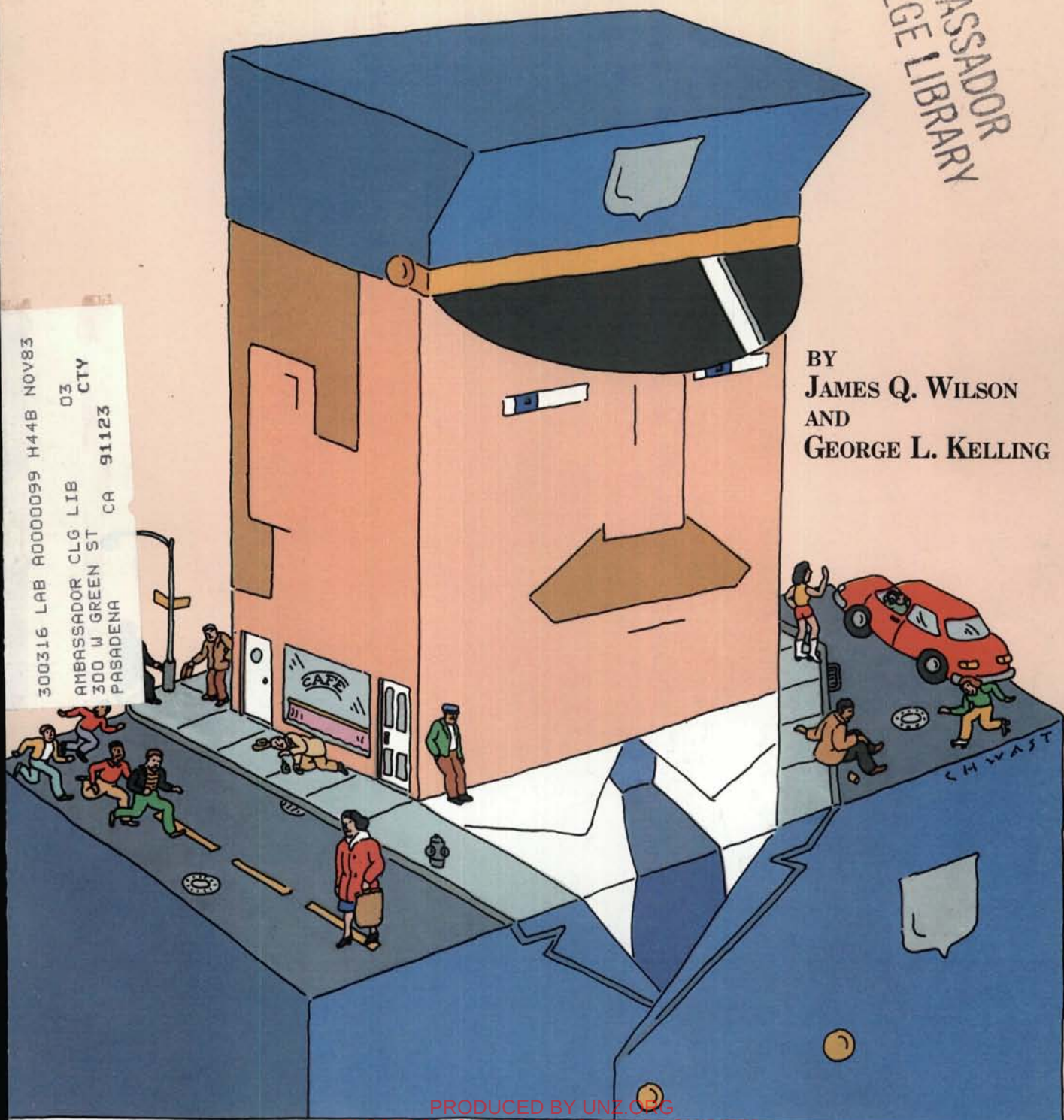
THE Atlantic

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Wrong Route to Peace

Across Western Europe, pacifist passions are on the rise. Marchers have hit the streets in large numbers in some capitals to protest measures taken by their own governments in their own defense.

The demonstrations are well-meant. They are understandable in the context of the deep-seated yearning of all people for a peaceful world.

Yet the new outcries are disturbing on both sides of the Atlantic. For they represent a turning away from reality. They reflect a welling up of isolationist sentiments that pose potential danger to the alliance, anchored by the U.S., which has kept Western Europe free and secure for upwards of three decades.

Many Europeans are aroused, in particular, by the proposed deployment of new breeds of U.S.-built missiles on European soil to modernize NATO's nuclear forces, an upgrading made necessary by Soviet deployment of improved missiles.

There's an irony about the new palpitations being expressed in the streets and salons of Europe. It was pointed up in a recent late-night TV talk show in England, with the audience participating. Two politicians were discussing the NATO missile deployment when a young man rose from the audience and asked: "Why are we protesting? We were the ones who asked the Americans to send the missiles over to protect us from the Russian missiles that are already there. The Americans didn't insist. We asked."

Yes, the Europeans did ask, back in the late '70s. Now, in a turnabout, some of them are calling for unilateral nuclear disarmament. They seem to feel that if Western Europe lowers its nuclear defenses, then the Soviets, in their inherent goodness, will dismantle all the missiles they're emplacing and targeting at capitals and

other key sites in the West. The notion seems to be that weakened resolve by the West will somehow cause the Soviets to lose their expansionist appetite.

That is a barren dream, a mythical vision. It flies against all the evidence of the Soviets' unslackened determination, backed by a military buildup of gargantuan dimensions, to exploit every opportunity to extend their military and political influence around the world, wherever and whenever they can. The Soviets' opportunism can be likened to that of a hotel burglar who skulks along the corridors at night, checking doorknobs, ready to enter any room he finds unlocked. The West must keep its doors locked.

Unilateral arms reduction is appeasement. It could be suicidal. Arms reduction surely is a cherished goal. But it must be *bilateral*. It must consist of specific, fair, verifiable measures growing out of negotiations between the two sides.

In a perfect world, there would be no nuclear weapons at all. In the real world, nuclear weapons exist. So long as they do, the best way of reducing the risk that they'll be used against you is to make certain that any nation considering their use is dissuaded from doing so by the knowledge that you are capable of striking back in kind.

That's deterrence. It has been at the heart of Western security since the end of World War II. Its validity remains unsailable today. But its continued efficacy is now being threatened by a misguided movement on the part of some in Europe who quiver in the face of the potent, ever-growing military machine to the east.

They envisage a neutral Europe, with military ties to neither of the superpowers. What they do not see, or are blinded to, is a neutral Europe becoming a neutered Europe.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FRIENDLY SKIES FOR AIRLINES

One of Frederick Thayer's theses is that the number of firms in the airline industry is correct and ideal, and that these firms should be dealt with as if they all had a fundamental right to exist ("Air Travel: Strike Means Friendly Skies for Airlines," December *Atlantic*). This is wrong. Business is a risk-taking adventure, with both good and bad outcomes possible.

Mr. Thayer claims that the problem with the airline industry is that too many airlines are flying with empty seats. The problem will not be solved by overbooking, voluntary flight cutbacks, or discount fares. Mr. Thayer never addresses the main issue: the right to exit the industry. He states "no airline could suspend the discount fares without surrendering to competitors." What is wrong with that? Has it occurred to Mr. Thayer that an overabundance of resources is invested in the airline industry, perhaps brought on by artificially high rates of return made possible by regulation, and that it may be time for some of these resources to be invested elsewhere? The industry does not need a regulating body to tell it that it is more efficient and profitable for traffic to fill two airlines rather than be spread out among more along with empty seats. If the major airlines are "among the most experienced organizations in the world," as he claims, then they should be able to see that for themselves. If they are not, then the more mismanaged airlines deserve to go out of business. A firm should bear the cost of bad decision-making.

DEAN SCALIA
DAMIAN VIRANT
Monterey Park, Calif.

The major surprise in Frederick Thayer's piece on air transport is the slender recognition—if, indeed, that is not too strong a term—of the harm the air controllers had visited on the public by capricious slowdowns in recent years, and the further harm that would have come from establishment of the right of public employees to strike despite written promises to the contrary in situations where society is immediately and

grievously affected. And while the upshot of the recent abortive strike has helped the carriers' finances, it has worked serious inconvenience to people accustomed to travel in and out of airfields from which service has been withdrawn.

FRANK J. KOTTKE
Pullman, Wash.

Frederick Thayer replies:

I did not say that "the number of firms in the airline industry is correct and ideal." I implied that there are too many airlines, and that some should be shut down and compensated. I have no magic number in mind, but no single route (city-pair) should have multiple carriers unless the operation is pooled and coordinated so as to avoid the waste of head-to-head competition. Whatever my critics prefer to believe, even two competing carriers produce too many empty seats.

Airline regulation did not lead to "artificially high rates of return." Price-regulated companies have traditionally made lower profits than unregulated large firms, because regulatory agencies prevent high profits.

The "right of exit" argument implies that common carrier transportation is only a luxury. The more correct question is whether citizens have a right to public transportation, even when living in small communities generating too little traffic to pay the full costs.

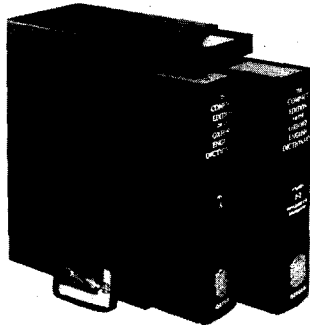
As for Mr. Kottke, two administrations misled the controllers, so they are more victims than victimizers. Some are still hauled to jail in chains, a disgraceful performance by government. As to public-employee unions in general, they are powerless without a right to strike. "Written promises" are given under duress. The public suffered hardly at all from the strike, the system now operating being the best evidence.

WHY (SOME) CHILDREN DON'T LIKE TO READ

In the November, 1981, issue, Bruno Bettelheim and Karen Zelan ("Why Children Don't Like to Read") attacked

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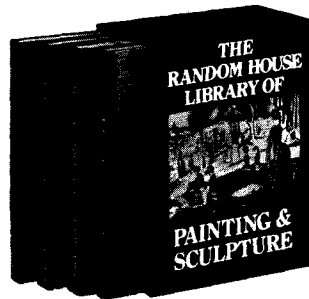
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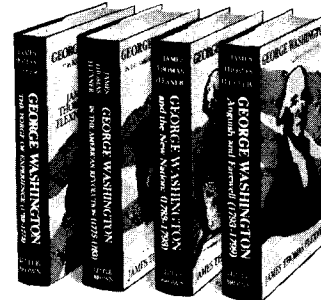
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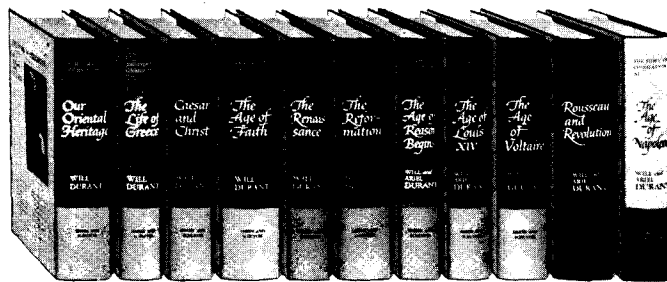
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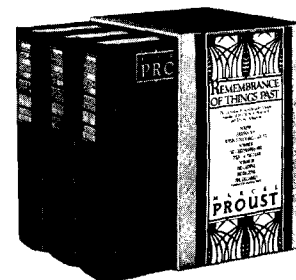
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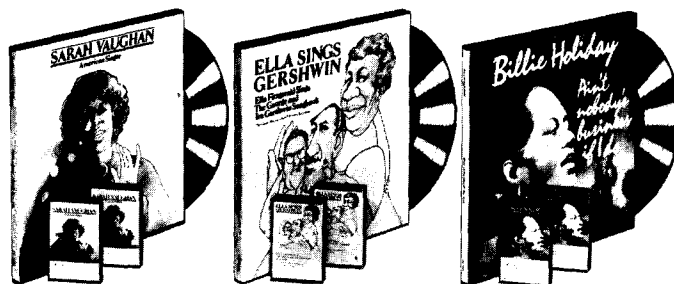
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the "innocuous content" and boring stories in American readers, and even criticized the aged and withdrawn Sullivan Reading Program. It was all very nostalgic, but were they serious? Can they not know of all the changes, the renaissance, occurring in education today?

The authors say little about the issue of discipline, apparently assuming that better schools wouldn't even think of it. Yet one of the great accomplishments in recent years has been the growing willingness of parents and schools to approach and think about the real issue of discipline.

BRIAN BURKE
Covelo, Calif.

I would comment on the authors' interpretation of three specific items in their article. First, their use of the term "decode" is somewhat misapplied. When children attempt to recall total words from memory, context, or inference from pictures that accompany a text, they are not "decoding" from logically learned and applied signals of language (the phonic sounds, or code, that letters make in a word) but are performing minor gestaltic miracles by conjuring meaning out of pure abstraction. Small wonder publishers dare to use so few words in their innocuous material. Small wonder so many children wind up "learning-disabled" in our schools: it is the schools that *do the disabling* of perfectly normal minds by demanding these cerebral acrobatics. In my local school districts, we teach our primary grade children a straightforward, traditional phonics approach—the Spalding method. After several weeks of what appears to be simply a drill-and-rote routine, most children have enough decoding skills to pronounce most words they encounter, and usually kindergarteners are ready to read before they enter the first grade.

First- and second-graders are averaging one and a half to two years above grade level in reading scores, and our fourth-graders—currently in their third year of Spalding—have achieved spelling scores on a par with our junior high students, who never had the benefits of a phonics approach. Decoding skills enable children to deal with the 85 percent of English words that conform to phonetic rules. Which is easier: to learn by rote memory the seventy-four phonic rules that unlock most of the words in our lan-

guage, or to memorize the hundreds of thousands of words in the language by sight recognition instead?

CHARLES MICCICHE
*Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Franconia, N.H.*

As a third-grade teacher, I feel compelled to add my fervent agreement to the Bettelheim-Zelan article.

It's plain that the authors haven't examined some of the newer texts, which have children doing even more inane workbook pages as part of reading.

Reading as a subject has been divided up into an almost infinite number of tiny units called phonics or comprehension skills, which the powers that be decree must each be taught, tested, marked, and recorded. The theory is that a child who masters these can read. One skill, for instance, is learning that *ch* sometimes sounds like *k*, as in "stomach." Children can figure out the word from the beginning letters plus the context. They don't need workbook pages and drills. Another skill is story sequence. The child reads a passage about Polly, who hears Mother call, gets up, gets dressed, eats, brushes her teeth, kisses Mother good-bye, and walks to school. The question to be answered asks, "What did Polly do after she brushed her teeth?" Why isn't it enough for the reader to know that it was a normal morning and Polly got herself ready and off to school? I could go on endlessly about the nonsensical details taught as reading.

Add to this the tests. Two new series I'm using this year have four tests per book, two books per year. Then there are the New Jersey Minimum Basic Skills Test, the nationally standardized Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, the readiness or pre-test for the MBS, the district's phonics and comprehension tests. We don't teach reading; we literally teach tests. We have that contradiction: children who are good at phonics tests but can't read. Conversely, I once had a boy who didn't know a long *i* from a short *e* but could read the encyclopedia. I was told I must teach him vowel sounds. I didn't do it.

With all the nonsense our days are filled with (arithmetic is nearly as bad as reading), we're hard put to find time to read aloud to the class a book they'd enjoy hearing or to give them time just to read for pleasure.

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Karen Zelan replies:

Regarding the letter by Brian Burke: 1. Sullivan is still in many schools (I checked this prior to publication of the piece in *The Atlantic*). 2. Every teacher I asked, those in Boston as well as in California, regarding the point that some of the readers we studied are no longer in use thought it outrageous that any group of children, past or present, was subjected to Sullivan and similar readers. 3. Every teacher I asked thought as well that the article (and book) would serve a preventive purpose: to assure that texts like Sullivan would not be printed again. 4. To protest that we didn't write about something else (discipline) is a dead giveaway—that Mr. Burke is more interested in arguing for arguing's sake than in thinking. Moreover, as Dewey long since pointed out, good teaching leads to good discipline and not the reverse.

Points made by Charles Micciche are interesting and thoughtful. The Spalding method may be effective (I didn't study it), but the salient point is, Do the children like to read using it? That's the purpose of our article/book. Yes, many good teachers supplement phonics instruction with texts that are more enjoyable, but many do not. And, more important, the child's reaction to the boring phonics texts generalizes all too frequently to other texts that may be inherently more interesting (another point described in the book).

The letter by Claire Guiseppi points out that the newer texts (which she thinks we haven't examined) are even worse. We would agree; we have examined them, but we don't have data on them (i.e. the children's spontaneous reactions) and so didn't include the newer texts in our article/book. Opinions without data wouldn't help much. I was interested in her example of the child who could read the encyclopedia but who didn't know the difference between a short e and a long i. I had a similar experience. A child I was treating for learning disorders could read at the sixth-grade level (as tested by an achievement battery given by the school) but the teacher refused to move this brilliant six-year-old boy to the second primer because he hadn't mastered the phonics exercises that went with the primer. When the boy's mother suggested to the teacher that perhaps he didn't need phonics exercises because he could already read, the teacher replied that it

didn't matter that he could read; what mattered was going step by step through the workbooks. I submit this is making the means the ends.

YEARS OF LBJ

Robert A. Caro ("The Years of Lyndon Johnson," November *Atlantic*), in recounting the birth of the Federal Securities Act of 1933, the episode from Sam Rayburn's legislative career presented in most detail, suggests that proponents of Rayburn's House bill faced "all but insoluble" difficulties because the Senate was strongly committed to its own, radically different bill. But the *Congressional Record*, and the book by Michael Parrish cited in Caro's narrative, indicate that leading senators from both parties had shifted their support to the House bill before the conference began. This and the facts that Rayburn was asked to chair the conference, that the House bill was readily accepted as the working draft, and that it was approved within a few days with only minor revisions suggest that Senate opposition was not substantial.

CURTIS CRAWFORD
Charlottesville, Va.

Robert A. Caro replies:

The depth of Wall Street-inspired, behind-the-scenes Senate opposition to Rayburn's House bill, which would regulate the Street more stringently than the Senate version, is clear from the accounts of men who watched the day-by-day fight for passage of the act. These men, who include two drafters of the act, Harvard Law School professor James M. Landis and Thomas Corcoran, the White House aide who also played a role in the fight for passage, state that from the beginning to the end of the fight Rayburn's force of personality and legislative genius were crucial factors in defeating this opposition. In regard, for example, to the so-called "readiness" with which the House bill was accepted as the working draft, Landis, who was present during the conference-committee meetings, describes in both his oral history and his detailed firsthand memoir, *"The Legislative History of the Securities Act of 1933,"* the toughness and maneuvers Rayburn had to employ—along with great tact—to get the House version accepted. An attempt to get a predominantly Senate draft "circulated in the

conference committee was rudely but firmly brushed off by Rayburn," Landis writes. Rayburn's success in getting the House bill accepted as the working draft, Landis states in his oral history, "was a great victory." It is, however, true that most books on the period all but ignore Rayburn's role in the fight for passage of the act, and that in speeches for the *Record*, senators hastened to say that they, too, were for stringent regulation.

WIN SOME, LOSE SOME

Thank you for publishing Jayne Anne Phillips's short story "Reminiscence to a Daughter" (November *Atlantic*). An excellent story. I cried while reading it in the public library, embarrassed, but unable to stop.

ROSIE RICHMOND
Springfield, Ill.

Boy, I have read some pretentious Bmagazine twaddle before. Ann Beattie's "Sunshine and Shadow" and T. Coraghessan Boyle's (who? what?) "The Overcoat II" (January *Atlantic*) were not just trendy or adolescent; both were downright silly.

FRANCISCO SIMON
New York, N.Y.

ADVICE & CONSENT

I didn't get the conclusions I was apparently supposed to get from reading "The Education of David Stockman" (December *Atlantic*). To me the article was an indictment more of the greed of special interests and the ineffectiveness of Congress than of David Stockman. Instead of blaming him for the failure of Reaganomics, we should be grateful that he is trying to help, because if not him, who? And if not now, when?

I hate to think we have to self-destruct economically before we admit that things like deficit spending, protectionism, and welfarism are not self-sustaining. David Stockman has the good of this country at heart, which is more than I can say for the liberals who are now gleefully ripping him to shreds.

CAROL BACHELDER
Boise, Id.

As an ex-OSS member, I dispute an implication in Garry Wills's article "The Kennedy Imprisonment" (January

Atlantic) that the CIA was a wartime agency. Not so. The Office of Strategic Services, General Donovan's group, was the U.S. intelligence during World War II. At war's end, this agency was entirely disbanded, and only then did the completely new CIA come into being with a virtually new staff.

SALLY PHILLIPS
New York, N.Y.

Your article "Will the Corn Belt End Up in the Rivers?" (December *Atlantic*) was pretty good. But it included some misconceptions.

American farmers are *not* arbitrarily slow to adopt new ideas. In fact, their haste to adopt new ideas and methods has been their undoing.

No-till or minimum-till farming has its place. I have been growing corn by these methods for five years now. I started with no-till, but found that in the hard, compacted soils in this area it was not possible to cover the seed adequately—even with 1,200 pounds of extra weight on a heavy no-till planter. I wanted to shift to minimum-till—but found no company that would sell me a chisel plow for a fifty-horsepower tractor.

I finally built my own chisel plow, and have planted corn for several years with minimum tillage. It works, but I need heavy doses of herbicides. The most common is Atrazine—but Atrazine persists in the soil, so if you use it you are forced to plant corn after corn; crop rotation can come only at the expense of an idle year in the rotation—which most farmers can't afford—or the use of a non-persisting herbicide, which is much more costly. Second, as herbicides are used year after year, the weed population gradually shifts to resistant forms. Thus, in fields that once had no velvet-leaf (a weed), I now find velvetleaf moving in—and thriving on the herbicides.

Agricultural experts have driven the American farmer more and more toward "agribusiness"—which has left the American farmer so deep in debt that he has no option but to force maximum production from the land, which exposes the land to erosion and degradation and creates huge crop surpluses that lower prices, thus forcing increased production at the expense of the future. This is the basic problem, and no-till and minimum-till, while they are useful techniques, are not a patch on the problem.

NATHAN OSER
Oriskany Falls, N.Y.

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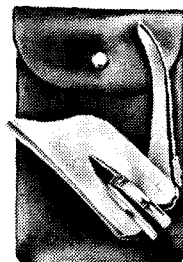
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REPORTS & COMMENT

FOREIGN POLICY OUTMODED ASSUMPTIONS

Ideas and fears with deep roots in the national psychology are helping to perpetuate the Cold War



.....
“WHEN SOCIETY REQUIRES to be rebuilt, there is no use in attempting to rebuild it on the old plan.”

“No great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible, until a great change takes place in the fundamental constitution of their modes of thought.”

John Stuart Mill's admonitions are still valid. Since the Truman Doctrine of 1947—perhaps since Hiroshima and Nagasaki—the United States has been locked into a Cold War whose temperature has fluctuated over the years, and now threatens to become incandescent. The origins of that war have fascinated a generation of historians whose disagreements are by now irremediable, perhaps because the explanations are not to be found so much in unraveling the tangled skein of history as in probing the philosophical and psychological assumptions that were uncritically adopted at the beginning of hostilities, and that have not yet been subjected to serious re-examination by those in power.

How are we to explain our obsession with communism, our paranoid hostility to the Soviet Union, our preoccupation with the Cold War, our reliance on military rather than political or diplomatic solutions, and our new readiness to entertain as a possibility what was long regarded as unthinkable—atomic warfare?

Can we avoid the “unthinkable” and rebuild a world of peace and order without a change in the “fundamental constitution of [our] modes of thought”—modes of thought themselves largely responsible for the crisis that glares upon us with relentless insistence from every quarter of the horizon?

Some of those assumptions have long enjoyed the dignity of official endorsement; some have been eroded in principle but linger on in official ideology—and are held together by passionate emotional harmony; some are sustained by interests so deeply entrenched that they seem invulnerable to criticism. As a body, the catechism of assumptions resembles in many respects that of the Moral Majority: it is rooted in emotion rather than in reason; it is negative rather than positive in its objectives; it is in-

spired by fear rather than by confidence; it is inconsistent and even contradictory in logic.

Consider some of those assumptions that have proved most tenacious.

First is the assumption that the world is divided between two great ideological and power groups, one dedicated to freedom, the other to slavery. History appointed the United States to represent and defend the first. The Soviet Union, whether by appointment or not is unclear, represents the second. These two worlds have been, for thirty years, locked in fateful combat.

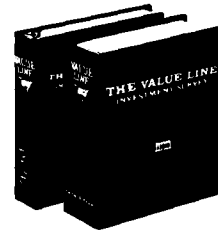
This simplistic picture has, over the years, been badly distorted by developments that do not fit its logic: the conflict between China and Russia; our own almost nonchalant rapprochement with China; the emergence of a new power



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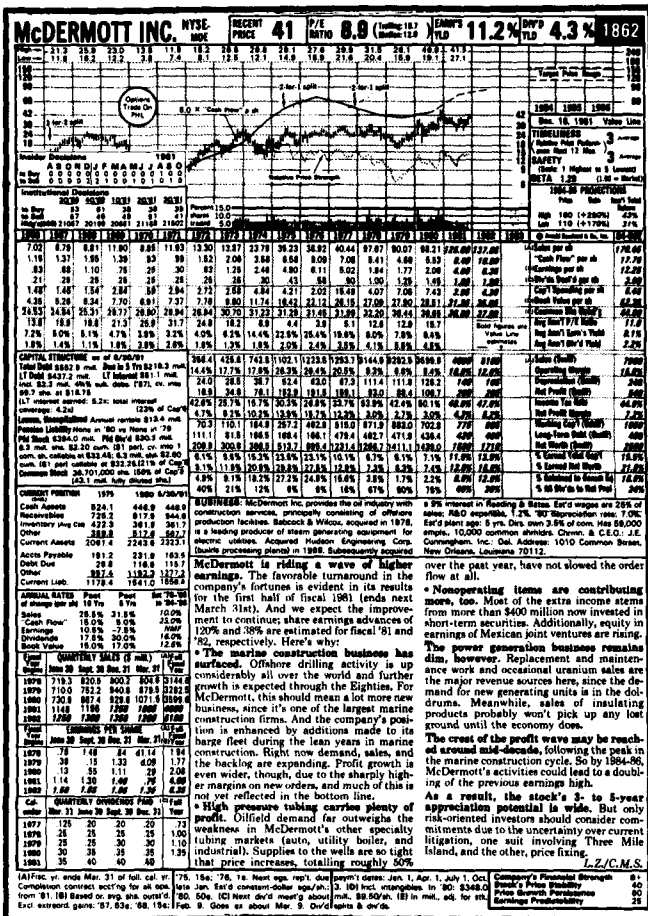
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bloc in the Middle East; and the growing reluctance of many members of the "free-world" coalition to respect either the freedom or the morality to whose defense we are committed. None of these developments has as yet persuaded many Americans to modify their original conviction that communism is the inveterate enemy.

A second assumption is implicit in the first: that communism, especially the Soviet variety, is not only dedicated to the enslavement of men but is godless and deeply immoral. Therefore the Soviet Union can never be relied upon to keep its word; it is engaged in ceaseless aggrandizement; it makes a mockery of international law and human dignity, and trusts only force. From all this it follows that for us to substitute diplomatic negotiations for military power would be to fall into a trap from which we could not extricate ourselves.

This assumption, to be sure, has deep roots in our history and our psychology. Though perhaps no other nation of modern times has had such spectacular success at the diplomatic table as the United States, Americans have long deluded themselves with the notion that their diplomats—invariably virtuous and innocent—have been consistently seduced and betrayed by wily Old World diplomats. This is, needless to say, fantasy. The Treaty of Paris of 1783 represented a spectacular triumph of American diplomats over both the British and the French, and the new nation found itself not thirteen independent states hugging the Atlantic but a vast empire. Twenty years later Jefferson intended to secure no more than New Orleans, but found that, thanks to Napoleon's impatience, the Treaty of 1803 doubled the territory of the United States without war and almost without cost. No one really won the War of 1812, but American diplomats won the negotiations at Ghent, and after that treaty, and the Battle of New Orleans, Europe left America alone. In 1871, the United States collected substantial awards from Great Britain for her violations of neutrality during the Civil War—violations of international law that were tame compared with those we now commit as a matter of course. In 1898, we dictated our own terms to Spain; and if in 1919 Wilson was not able to get all the Fourteen Points into the Treaty of Versailles, he did get his associates to set up a League of Nations, which we subsequently scuttled. Cer-

tainly we were in command in 1945, dictating terms not only to Germany and Japan but to our allies as well—terms characterized on the whole by magnanimity. Yalta, which most Americans have been led to believe a diplomatic defeat, was no such thing: in the military circumstances of February, 1945 (when American forces had not yet crossed the Rhine), it constituted an American success.

As for violation of international law, treaties, and agreements, and of the territorial integrity of weaker nations, the record of the Soviet Union is indeed deplorable. Whether it differs greatly from the American record depends, no doubt, upon the point of view. Little need to rehearse that record: suffice it to say that the CIA has at least tried to be as subversive as the KGB in many parts of the globe, that intervention in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala was no less in violation of law than the Soviet invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and that a ten-year undeclared war in Vietnam, with casualties of some two million, both military and civilian, and bombardment with three times the tonnage dropped on Germany and Japan in World War II contrasts unfavorably with the much-condemned Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Nothing surprising about all this except that a people brought up, for the most part, on the New Testament should so readily ignore the question raised by Matthew: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

A third assumption is rooted in the second: that the Soviet Union is the mortal enemy of the United States and that her animosity is implacable. This assumption, implicit in innumerable statements by President Reagan and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, dictates most of our current political and military programs. The term "dictates" is appropriate, for we no longer appear to be masters of our own destiny or even in control of our policies, but react with almost Pavlovian response to the real or imagined policies of the Soviet Union. Clearly, our reaction to the Polish crisis is animated more by hostility to the Soviet Union than by compassion for Poland.

In all this we rarely ask ourselves what the Soviet Union has to gain by destroying the United States. In the past

neither czarist nor Communist Russia has been an "enemy" of the United States, and in the twentieth century Russia was allied with or associated with the United States in two major wars. Nor do many Americans pause to acknowledge that the Communists have more ground for fearing the United States than we have for fearing them: after all, American military forces invaded the Soviet Union at Archangel and Vladivostok to prevent the Bolshevik takeover and remained on Russian soil for well over two years; had Communist forces invaded the United States in, let us say, Alaska or Florida, we would not be quite so forgetful.

That the ideological conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States is deep and perhaps irremediable cannot be denied. It is sobering to recall that during the early years of the nineteenth century—and, indeed, again during our Civil War—much of Europe looked upon the United States as we now look upon the Soviet Union, and with more justification. The new American republic did indeed threaten the peace and security of Old World nations. Republicanism, democracy, constitutionalism, and social equality challenged all Old World monarchies and class societies. That challenge was practical—millions of Europeans found refuge in America—and it was philosophical, as well. Listen to Prince Metternich, the greatest and most powerful European statesman of his generation, excoriate the United States for proclaiming the Monroe Doctrine:

These United States . . . have suddenly left a sphere too narrow for their ambition, and have astonished Europe by a new act of revolt, more unprovoked, fully as audacious, and no less dangerous than the former [against Britain]. They have distinctly and exactly announced their intention to set not only power against power, but, to express it more exactly, altar against altar. In their indecent declarations they have cast blame and scorn on the institutions of Europe most worthy of respect. . . . In permitting themselves these unprovoked attacks, in fostering revolutions wherever they show themselves, in regretting those which have failed, in extending a helping hand to those which seem to prosper, they lend new strength to the apostles of sedition, and re-animate the courage of every conspirator. If this flood of evil

doctrines and pernicious examples should extend over the whole of America, what would become of our religious and political institutions, of the moral forces of our governments, and of the conservative system which has saved Europe from complete dissolution?

Nor was this paranoia confined to spokesmen of autocratic countries. Here is what the leading British journal of its day—*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*—had to say of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation:

Monstrous, reckless, devilish. . . . It proves . . . [that] rather than lose their trade and custom, the North would league itself with Beelzebub and seek to make a hell of half a continent. In return this atrocious act justifies the South in hoisting the black flag . . . And thus . . . we are called upon to contemplate a war more full of horrors and wickedness than any which stands recorded in the world's history.

The exacerbation of anti-Russian paranoia by this administration is not in fact in the mainstream of American experience. We have had less excuse for it than any other major nation, for since 1815 we have never been threatened by external aggression by any nation except Japan nor, except for the Civil War, by serious ideological conflicts.

Our current crisis dramatizes the wisdom of President Washington's warning, in his Farewell Address:

. . . nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations . . . be excluded; and that in place of them just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection . . . Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury . . .

IT IS PERHAPS THIS enslavement to our own animosity that explains a fourth major assumption—one we might call the Dr. Strangelove syndrome: that we could fight and "win" an atomic war; that the loss of 50 million to 100 million lives would be "acceptable," that the Republic could survive and flourish after such a victory. An atomic war is no longer "unthinkable"; perhaps it never was: after

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all, we are the only nation ever to use the atomic weapon against an enemy. Now spokesmen of both our parties have declared that in an "emergency" we would not hesitate to use it again. In all this we are reminded of the moral of slavery: when a "necessary evil" becomes necessary enough, it ceases to be an evil.

This philosophy is a product, or a by-product, of a fifth assumption: that the most effective way, and perhaps the only way, to counter the threat of communism is neither political, economic, nor moral but quite simply military, and that the mere threat of overwhelming military might will persuade all rivals to abandon the field.

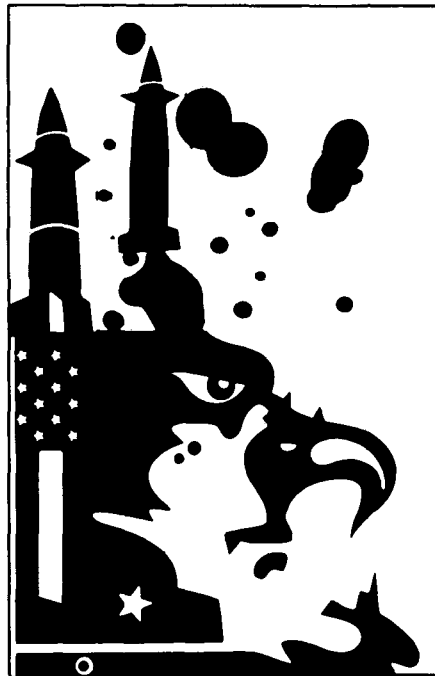
This is, to be sure, a familiar maxim: it was Voltaire who observed that God is always for the big battalions. But there is an older wisdom. More than three centuries ago Francis Bacon wrote, "Walled towers, stored arsenals, and armories, goodly races of horse, chariots of war, elephants, ordnance, artillery and the like—all this is but a sheep in lion's skin, except the breed and disposition of the people be stout . . ."

That is still true, though we must rephrase it to comport with modern weaponry. The futility of reliance on superiority in nuclear arms should have been clear as early as 1949, when the Russians astonished most of the "experts" by detonating their own atomic bomb a decade earlier than had been expected. Certainly it should be clear by now that the Russians can produce anything that we can produce, and that the notion of "winning" an arms race is fantasy. The hope—perhaps the only hope—of avoiding a nuclear war lies not in adding another \$1,500 billion to the \$2,000 billion we have already spent on the military since the close of World War II but in mutual abandonment of that race, and a cooperative program of systematic reduction of existing nuclear arms.

As for security, that is indeed to be found in the "stoutness" and the disposition of the people—in their courage, intelligence, and resourcefulness, and in the preservation and nurture of that common wealth with which Nature has endowed them. The most serious threat to national security is in the wastage of human and the exhaustion of natural resources. It is in permitting our industrial and technological enterprises, our transportation system, our financial health, to deteriorate, our cities to decay into

slums, our schools to fail of their primary functions of education, our society to be ravaged by poverty, lawlessness, racial strife, class hostilities, and injustice. It is in a leadership that lacks prudence, wisdom, and vision. It is in a society whose leaders no longer invoke, and whose people no longer take seriously, those concepts of public virtue, of the pursuit of happiness, and of the fiduciary obligation to posterity that were the all-but-universal precepts of the generation that founded the Republic.

A sixth assumption is a by-product of the fifth: that the security of the United States is bound up with and dependent on whatever regimes throughout the



globe are ostentatiously anti-Communist. Our record here is a dismal one, yet instead of repudiating that record, the present administration seems determined to outstrip it. We persist in regarding South Korea and Taiwan as not only friends but allies; we practically forced Pakistan to accept billions of dollars for arms; we have abandoned all pretense of holding aloof from the tyrannical regimes of Chile and Argentina; we even conjure up a distinction between "authoritarian" and "totalitarian" regimes, whose only real distinction is whether they are authoritarian on our side or not. The vocabulary of this administration, as of Nixon's, inevitably conjures up what Thucydides said of the corruption of language in the Athens of his day: "What used to be described as a

thoughtless act of aggression, was now regarded as the courage one would expect to find in a party member . . . fanatical enthusiasm was the mark of a real man . . . anyone who held violent opinions could always be trusted . . . and to plot successfully was a sign of intelligence."

To many of the peoples of the Third World, and even of the European world, the United States appears to be what the Holy Alliance was in the early nineteenth century. The analogy does not favor the United States, for while the Holy Alliance, for all its interventions in Spain and Italy and Greece, had the good sense to keep out of distant continents, the United States does not. What our interventions throughout the globe—Vietnam, Cambodia, Angola, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Iran—have in common with those of the Holy Alliance is their failure.

MUCH OF OUR NEW "imperialism" is rooted in a seventh assumption: that the United States is not only a Western but an African and an Asian power.

That the United States is a world power is incontestable. Clearly, too, it is by virtue of geography an Atlantic power and a Pacific power, and it is by virtue of history something of a European power—a fact convincingly vindicated by participation in two world wars. But the United States is no more an Asian power than China or Japan is an American power. We have never permitted an Asian power to establish a military presence in the American continents. We bought Alaska from Russia, and the 1912 Lodge Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine extended that doctrine to "any Government, not American." It was the illusion that we could control the internal politics of China that distracted us from a recognition of reality for a quarter-century: certainly the greatest blunder in the history of American diplomacy. Even now, notwithstanding the commonsense reversal of that misguided policy by Nixon and Kissinger, we have not yet wholly rid ourselves of the purblind notion that we can, and should, "play the China card"—a notion that in its arrogance and in its vulgarity must represent the low-water mark of American foreign policy.

Another corollary of our reliance on the military for security is dramatized by an eighth assumption: that to achieve

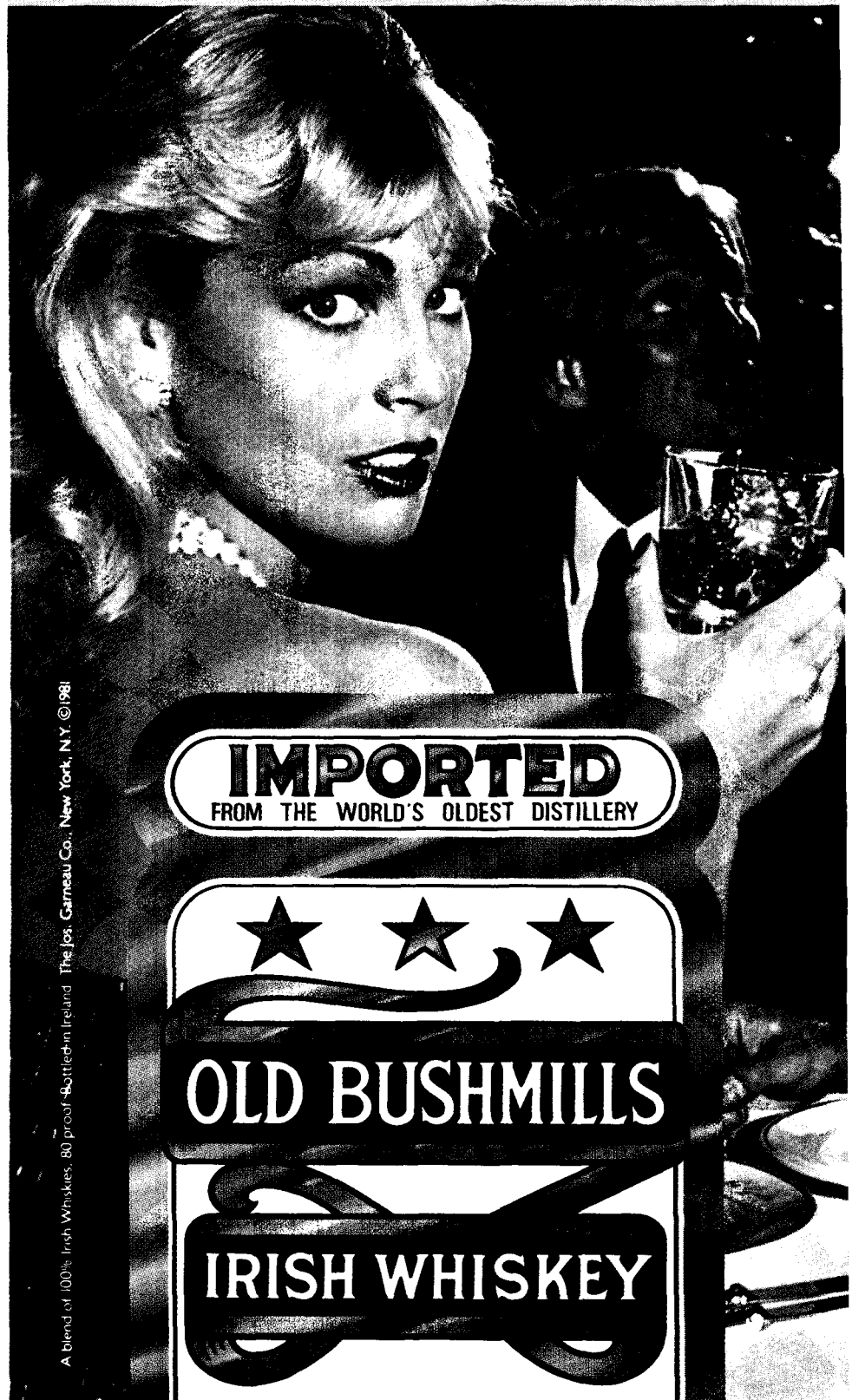
security it is proper for government to conscript science and scholarship for the purposes of war, cold or not; that, in short, the scientific, philosophical, and cultural community should be an instrument of the State for secular purposes.

This principle was not embraced by those who founded the Republic nor, for that matter, by the philosophers of the Enlightenment in the Old World. During the American Revolution, Benjamin Franklin joined with the French minister of finance, Jacques Necker, to decree immunity for Captain Cook because he was "engaged in pursuits beneficial to mankind." In the midst of the Napoleonic Wars, the French Institute conferred its gold medal on the great British scientist Humphrey Davy, and while the war was still raging, Sir Humphrey crossed the Channel to accept that honor. "If two countries are at war," he said, "the men of science are not." Napoleon himself shared this view: during his victorious campaign in Germany, he spared the university city of Göttingen from bombardment because it was the home of the greatest of classical scholars, Christian Heyne. And it was Napoleon, too, who, at the request of Joseph Banks of the Royal Society, freed the great geologist Dolomieu from the dungeons of Naples. Edward Jenner, the discoverer of the smallpox vaccine, put it for his whole generation: "The sciences are never at war. Peace must always preside in the bosoms of those whose object is the augmentation of human happiness."

It was Thomas Jefferson who stated this principle most clearly and most eloquently, and this at a time when he himself had abandoned his study and his laboratory to serve in the Virginia legislature. In 1778, he addressed a letter to the scientist David Rittenhouse, then serving as treasurer to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

Your time for two years past has . . . been principally employed in the civil government of your country. Tho' I have been aware of the authority our cause would acquire with the world from its being known that yourself and Doctr. Franklin were zealous friends to it, and am myself duly impressed with a sense of arduousness of government, and the obligation those are under who are able to conduct it, yet I am also satisfied there is an order of geniuses above that obligation, and therefore exempted from it. No body can conceive that nature

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"We wanted this collection to have it all! The great bands, the soloists and the singers. It's good to know this music is all here . . . all together . . . for now and the future."

—Count Basie

The greatest authorities on the music of America's big band era—musicians and music critics alike—have joined together, for the first time, to assemble the definitive collection of big band recordings.

This is a collection unlike any issued before. For the bandleaders, writers and critics who comprise this panel are the very same ones who shaped the big band era.

These experts enlisted the cooperation of the record companies which now hold the original master recordings of the big name bands. Thus, the panel was able to make its selections from virtually every big band performance ever recorded—making this the first such collection ever assembled from all the big band record labels.

As a result, this will be the most complete, comprehensive and authoritative collection ever devoted to big band music. And it will be the first ever available on proof-quality records of exceptional fidelity.

All the great bands, singers and soloists in their greatest recorded performances

The Archive Collection of *The Greatest Recordings of the Big Band Era* will be all-encompassing. A collection which reflects the musical diversity of the era. The crisp swing of Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, the relaxed rhythm of Count Basie and Jimmie Lunceford, the bright dixieland of Bob Crosby, the sophisticated stylings of Duke Ellington, the dreamy delicate sounds of Ray Noble, the soft, sweet music of Guy Lombardo and Sammy Kaye. It will also include:

The musical forerunners of the era—Paul Whiteman, with Bing Crosby and Bix Beiderbecke; Fletcher Henderson, who influenced Benny Goodman and many others; the early sounds of Glen Gray and Fred Waring.



The nostalgic themes of the big bands—Glenn Miller's "Moonlight Serenade" . . . Tommy Dorsey's "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" . . . Louis Armstrong's "When It's Sleepy Time Down South" . . . Vaughn Monroe's "Racing with the Moon."

The greatest hits of an entire generation—Charlie Barnet's "Cherokee," Duke Ellington's "Take the 'A' Train," Artie Shaw's "Frenesi," Frankie Carle's "Sunrise Serenade," Tommy Dorsey's "Opus One," Eddy Duchin's "Stormy Weather," and Benny Goodman's "Sing, Sing, Sing," with Gene Krupa.

The big band vocalists that audiences loved . . . and still remember. Frank Sinatra with Tommy Dorsey, Peggy Lee with Benny Goodman, Doris Day with Les Brown, Anita O'Day with Gene Krupa, Bob Eberly and Helen O'Connell with Jimmy Dorsey. And many more, including Perry Como, Lena Horne and Ella Fitzgerald.

The ultimate collection of original big band recordings

This is a collection that would be difficult—or impossible—for any individual to assemble. For these selections have been drawn from the archives of all the major record companies . . . and such vintage labels as Brunswick, OKeh, Vocalion, Bluebird and Perfect.

Many of these recordings—like Wayne King's "Melody of Love"—have been unavailable for years. Others are hard to find recordings of early radio broadcasts . . . such as Frank Sinatra's emotional farewell to the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, doing his spectacular rendition of "The Song Is You." Still others were only released on 78s—and never re-issued: Bob Crosby's "Black Zephyr" and Gus Arnheim's "A Peach of a Pair" with Russ Columbo.

In many cases, the panel considered several different versions of the same song, before selecting a particular recording for the collection. Thus, every selection will be a classic performance. An original recording of the era . . . recaptured on records of superior listening quality.

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These records will be produced to the highest standards possible by The Franklin Mint Record Society—judged by audio experts to produce some of the finest records available today.

Each recording will first undergo a painstaking restoration process—electronically "cleaned" groove-by-groove to eliminate extraneous surface noise and preserve the original brilliance of the music.

The records will be pressed in a dust-free "clean room" using a special vinyl that contains its own anti-static element. This meticulous pressing technique, together with the special record vinyl, results in a more rigid, durable and dust-resistant record. A proof quality record that actually sounds better than the original—and may be played through any audio system.

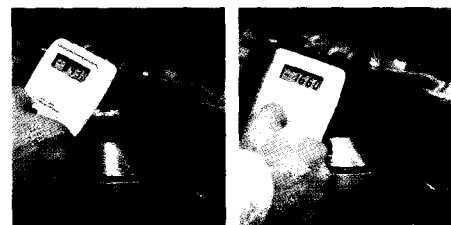
Hardbound albums and big band histories provided

In keeping with the importance of this collection, special hardbound albums have been designed to house and protect all one hundred proof-quality records.

Each album holds four long-playing records, with an expertly written commentary—prepared by members of the advisory panel, and illustrated with photographs of the bands. A complete reference index to bandleaders, songs and solo artists will also be provided.

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If you remember the big bands . . . if you've ever



Strict record pressing standards, and audio and visual inspection, assure high quality. Ordinary records (left) have static charges that attract dust, causing surface noise. But the special anti-static vinyl used in Franklin Mint records (right) assures clearer sound. Electrostatic meter tests show that the Franklin Mint record has only one-fifth the static charge of ordinary records.

wished to relive the music of that period . . . or if you've only just discovered this unique sound in American popular music . . . this is your opportunity. An opportunity to share and enjoy—with all the members of your family—the unforgettable sound of the big bands.

The collection may be acquired only by direct subscription. It will not be sold in record stores. To subscribe now, mail the attached application to The Franklin Mint Record Society, Franklin Center, Pennsylvania 19091. Please do so by March 31, 1982.

The Advisory Panel

COUNT BASIE for more than 40 years, leader of one of the most consistently swinging bands in history.

LES BROWN outstanding writer, arranger and leader of one of the era's most popular dance bands.

DAVE DEXTER, JR. a record producer for 31 years, former *Down Beat* editor and author of *The Jazz Story* and *Playback*.

LIONEL HAMPTON a leader whose exuberance has inspired musicians and audiences alike for more than five decades.

WOODY HERMAN who continues to be one of the most popular and successful of all leaders—discoverer of many talented musicians.

HARRY JAMES a brilliant trumpeter of both beautiful ballads and rip-roaring swing.

SAMMY KAYE "Mister Swing and Sway," master of the sweet sound—always popular, always danceable.

NEIL McCAFFREY music critic and editor of *American Dance Band Discography* and *The Complete Encyclopedia of Popular Music and Jazz*.

GEORGE T. SIMON music critic, record producer, author of the definitive work on dance bands—*The Big Bands*—and *The Best of the Music Makers*.

RICHARD SUDHALTER jazz critic of *The New York Post*, author of *Bix: Man and Legend*, and a widely respected jazz cornetist.

JOHN S. WILSON jazz and popular music critic of *The New York Times*, author of *Jazz: The Transition Years*, *The Collector's Jazz: Traditional and Swing*, *The Collector's Jazz: Modern*.

ever intended to throw away a Newton upon the occupations of a crown. It would have been a prodigality for which even the conduct of providence might have been arraigned, had he been by birth annexed to what was so far below him.

ANINTH ASSUMPTION, PERHAPS the most intractable of all, is that any of the fundamental problems that confront us—and other nations of the globe—can be resolved within the framework of the nation-state system. The inescapable fact, dramatized by the energy crisis, the population crisis, the armaments race, and so forth, is that nationalism as we have known it in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century is as much of an anachronism today as was States Rights when Calhoun preached it and Jefferson Davis fought for it. Just as we know, or should know, that none of our domestic problems can be solved within the artificial boundaries of the states, so none of our global problems can be solved within the largely artificial boundaries of nations—artificial not so much in the eyes of history as in the eyes of Nature. Nature, as the dispenser of all resources, knows no boundaries between North and South Dakota or Kansas and Nebraska, no boundaries, for that matter, between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, and very few between the two Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Every major problem that confronts us is global—energy, pollution, the destruction of the oceans and the seas, the erosion of agricultural and forest lands, the control of epidemics and of plant and animal diseases, famine in large parts of Asia and Africa and a population increase that promises to aggravate famine, inflation, international terrorism, nuclear pollution, and nuclear arms control. Not one of these can be solved within the limits of a single nation.

Even to mitigate these problems requires the cooperation of statesmen, scientists, and moral philosophers in every country. Americans should find it easier to achieve such cooperation than did the peoples of Old World nations, for they are the heirs and the beneficiaries of a philosophy that proclaimed that *all* men were created equal and endowed with unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Of all the assumptions I have discussed, that which takes nationalism for

granted is perhaps the most deeply rooted and the most tenacious. Yet when we reflect that assumptions, even certainties, no less tenacious in the past—about the very nature of the cosmic system, about the superiority of one race to all others, about the naturalness of women's subordination to men, about the providential order of a class society, about the absolute necessity of a state church or religion—have all given way to the implacable pressure of science and of reality, we may conclude that what Tocqueville wrote well over a century ago is still valid:

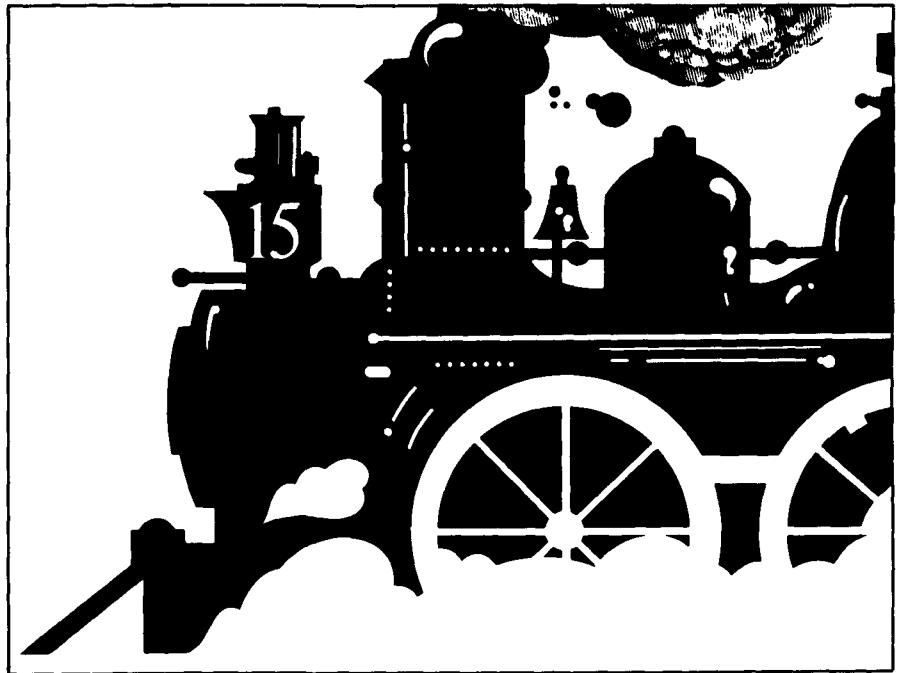
The world that is rising into existence is still half encumbered by the

remains of the world that is waning into decay; and amid the vast perplexity of human affairs none can say how much of ancient institutions and former customs will remain or how much will completely disappear.

If some of our ancient institutions do not disappear, there is little likelihood that we shall remain.

—Henry Steele Commager

Henry Steele Commager, noted historian and educator, has taught at many universities here and abroad. He is now at work on a fifty-volume work, The Rise of the American Nation.



NORTHFIELD, VT. SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

*Explorations and observations
from a self-appointed
selectman of textures*



ON MY WAY TO work in early March, I stop halfway down my street to watch the first of the morning's two sunrises. The street is on a terrace beside the valley, a lakeshore left high and dry at the end of the last glaciation. It is 8:15, and the snowbanks, the white frame houses, and the horse barns con-

verted to garages stand in pearly, even light. A febrile spot in the sky behind Turkey Hill intensifies; the backlight outlines with particular clarity a score of trees along the crest. They are as small as toothpicks, and look like men in solemn procession. An edge of sun incinerates them. In the next few minutes, the sun climbs to its whole-dime size, and rime begins to steam off the roofs. Turkey Hill, casting a shadow, reels it in. I am amazed at how swift, how steady, and how visible the sun's progress is.

I descend the slope of the old lake terrace to the Dog River, and make the sunrise happen all over again. At the footbridge, I am still in shadow. The Dog River, only thirty feet wide here, meanders through town with the logic of a jigsaw cutting a puzzle. The town devel-

oped north-south on a flood plain and heaps of glacial debris along the main valley. Side streets tend to follow ravines. We have four church spires among the elms and maples, a common, a military college, and split-level houses pushing into hillside pastures.

The Brown Public Library exhibits a painting of Northfield done around 1840 by Mary Ann Paine, a daughter-in-law of Elijah Paine, Northfield's first patriarch. It shows the familiar humps of our hills (more lumbered-off then than now), the Paine hotel, Elijah Paine's three-story brick woolen mill (given impetus by the embargo of 1812), and the substantial home of his son, Charles, across the road from the church Charles Paine built. There is a scatter of less-impressive dwellings. In the foreground, a dirt road we now call Water Street parallels the winding Dog River. At the far right, a few inches beyond the frame, is the bend where the iron footbridge will be; nearly a century will pass before that will come into the picture. In Mary Ann's painting of Northfield, time is stuck on a halcyon summer day in 1840. We see sheep (maybe part of Paine's flock for the Paine mill), an ox team, and one awkward human being. I want to chip away the paint and peek inside the woods, the factory, the hotel, and the clapboard houses, and know how generations of men and women have lived and died and grown up again for 150 years. I want to scrape away the Dog River's veneer, to restore time's flow and understand how the current carries me, shivering in winter shadow, to the footbridge and the day's second sunrise. The top of Turkey Hill glows again. I have lived in this town only sixteen years, and the histories of the families here are not my history. But I walk daily to my work among the relics of my fellow citizens long dead, and I mull things over, trying to find my place among men. For the second time today, the figures appear in single file on the top of Turkey Hill. They stand as still as trees for a moment, as if about to speak, then disappear in the blaze of day.

I am no local historian but a randomly nosy man. Northfield, always more than a farming community, has wrought its essential character out of railroad and stone. I am self-appointed selectman of textures; treasurer of railroad spikes, trestles, granite, and slate; assessor of time's true weight and measure. On my way to work I find the artifacts of my

real vocation strewn everywhere. I cross the footbridge, and the morning sun shines through a rectangular arch of angle irons, throwing across the planks shadows that ripple up my torso and slip a net over my head. The framework is not strictly rectangular but is wrenched askew. Beams are dented, and one is ripped an inch or two. The bridge, built in 1924, was swept from its abutments in the flood of 1927. Sheds, pigs, and wood-piles caromed on the torrent, but the townspeople salvaged one thing from the precipitous moment, and set it back in place. The footbridge is one of the many ugly things in town that have the beauty of being necessary in our lives, and the dignity of having endured.

The footbridge leads onto a rough field, and beyond that, on the west side of the common, is a building that was once a railroad depot. Most of the town's businesses are on the north and east sides of the oval common, which in fits of formality we call Depot Square. The National Guard Armory and an insurance office in a frame house are built against the hill that flanks the south side of the common. Next to them but on top of the hill, the United Church fronts Main Street as it descends to Depot Square. One who sits on the church lawn is in control of things, surveying the Municipal Building across the way, the common, Main Street passing north to the gray, barn-like grade school on the next hill, and the town's one traffic light. Clocks on all four sides of the church spire give the correct time.

ELIJAH PAINE—REVOLUTIONARY War soldier, friend of George Washington, shrewd pioneer, industrialist, judge, legislator, and the first orator before (later a president of) the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard—arrived in the Northfield area in 1784 and established a sawmill and a gristmill, for which he was granted 400 acres of land. (The chipped grindstone of his gristmill now lies on the common like nibbled granite cheese.) Elijah acquired much more land, and later built the woolen mill that his daughter-in-law celebrated in her painting. Julia W. McIntire, in *Green Mountain Heritage: The Chronicle of Northfield, Vermont*, a town project published in 1974, says of Elijah: "Often irritated by minor annoyances but calm when faced with serious troubles, he had a grave countenance, a nervous, quick manner of speaking, and a

powerful voice which carried a long distance to men in the fields. Elijah Paine was never idle and kept a sharp eye on his workers." He was a model of punctuality, and was the kind of Abe Lincoln American who once paid a debt on time by riding eighty miles without sleep for a day and a night. He seems to have been a keen, ambitious, honest fellow who dressed in the colonial fashion long after that was thought antique. He became, finally, four or five inches of legend in local history books.

Elijah Paine's son, Charles, became governor of Vermont and president of the Vermont Central Railroad, bringing the railroad to Northfield in 1848, and running a spur from the depot to his hotel on the other side of the common. The railroad yard was built on part of Elijah Paine's farm; granite sheds took over the railroad yard; now the sheds are rubble foundations among weeds between the depot and the footbridge. Paine Mountain, 2,405 feet high, is the most prominent of the hills surrounding town, but no Paine has ever been listed in the telephone book. Basques, Irish, Italians, Welsh, and Scots supplemented the original stock, leaving their namesakes walking the town today.

CHARLES PAINE'S VERMONT Central Railroad could have come up two ways from White River: through the Williamstown Gulf to Barre, or up the Third Branch of the White River through Roxbury into Northfield. The debate flares up every once in a while about why Northfield won out. The reasons seem to be that the longer but less-steep Roxbury grade was cheaper to lay track on, that Charles Paine could sell much of his Northfield property to the railroad, and that Paine was a loyal Northfield citizen. On October 11, 1848, at twenty past nine in the evening, the *Abigail Adams* pulled the first train into town. The twenty-three-ton *Abigail* was too small for heavy loads; sometimes the passengers were forced to get out and push. The next year the Vermont Central took delivery of the green-and-gold *Governor Paine*, which had a cow-catcher, two red drive wheels, a clamorous bell, a smokestack like the Mad Hatter's hat to trap cinders, a fancy headlamp, and plenty of polished wood and brass. The steam engine cost \$10,000, and could run a mile from a dead stop in forty-three seconds.

This wilderness across from the foot-

bridge, which Elijah Paine cleared for a farm and which Charles Paine sold for a railroad yard, was near the middle of the Vermont Central line, which extended from White River to Burlington. Northfield was also near the railroad's highest elevation, where winter snows were deepest. The town became a railroad center with snowplows and steam engines, machine shops, and a roundhouse with a man-powered turntable before it. Lumber was 25 to 50 percent cheaper locally than the established railcar manufacturers bought it for, so the railroad decided to build its own freight and baggage cars. The shops at Northfield also made, and rebuilt, locomotives. The railroad brought the Irish to town, as granite would later attract Italians, and slate the Welsh. From the 1850s to the end of the Civil War, Northfield was a thriving railroad center.

The depot—a two-story, slab-sided brick building with a pitched roof like two black fields—is no longer a depot, but it still houses a bank, as it has since 1854. Wings off either side of the main depot are gone, and so are the small two-story structures they led to. The depot extended over the tracks, and the huge doors at the ends were shut tight for the sabbath. The whole shebang cost \$11,571.22, which was thought a bargain even in 1848. Today the south wing is a tarred parking lot, where in winter the roof shunts ice chunks onto cars at the drive-in teller's window. The north wing is an informal cinder parking space, and here protrude the granite outlines of the foundation, roots of what was. One day I peered in the ticket agent's bay window at the rear of the bank. I saw a magnificent oak desk, too old-fashioned for a modern business office, heaped with yellowing papers; a Season's Greetings sign; a plaque giving out-of-date bank hours; and a silver steam radiator. Electric wires to the train signals and telegraph were cut, the limp ends taped up. I leaned a long time against the ticket agent's window, catching no one's attention. Pigeons cooed and cooed in the rafters of the platform roof. Their droppings crackled underfoot. Every day they circle the great black fields, gliding onto the rooftop or swooping under the capacious eaves—as if the trains were still here.

Charles Paine had his headquarters on the second floor of the depot at the northeast windows. The building was partially destroyed by a mysterious fire

on a May night in 1852. A committee of the railroad corporation, fast asleep, was going to inspect the line's financial records the next morning, but these were destroyed in the fire. The railroad had recently gotten into serious economic difficulties. The upshot of all this was that Charles Paine was kicked out of the company, the railroad went broke, and it had to be thoroughly reorganized. The Canadian National bought the railroad at public auction in 1929, and maintains the roadbed in a way American railroads wouldn't. The company put in new ties a few years ago; recently it replaced the track with welded rails that lay along the roadbed in subtle warps, like thousand-foot strands of licorice, before they were trued up and spiked taut. Crews smashed casks open, consumed fistfuls of spikes like cocktail peanuts, and left one day down the lone pair of rails leading out of town.

Walking the tracks to work each morning, I was delighted at the bits of debris I found strewn along the right-of-way: old spikes, new spikes, ties, plates, strange forged shapes I can't name. It looked to me like valuable salvage. On my desk I keep as a paperweight a pristine railroad spike—black, oxidized only in little spots, the head scarred by the swipe that cut it from its umbilicus. The tip is sharp and slightly curled where the heat-softened metal was sliced to a two-sided point. The spike weighs thirteen ounces; its heft has life. Its texture is a relief map of the heat and violence of its making. The metal is cool reality against the cheek.

Sunk into each end of a railroad tie is a half-inch-wide metal strip delicately curved into an "S" that holds the wood together as it dries out. I collected these, fallen from rotted wood, as if they were my monogram upon the land, the seal of my belonging on the face of the earth. They might connect me with the old railroaders, but what secrets can a one-letter alphabet spell out? At first I wanted to hoard the liftable railroad treasures. Finally, I decided I couldn't salvage everything. I kept a single "S" on which to hang a paint can from the ladder rung; I tested the heft and coolness of several spikes, selected one, and trudged home with my paperweight.

THE TROUBLE WITH this town is that it's all loose ends. Why did Sarah Paine, Charles's mother, leave her children, the youngest only a toddler, and

live apart from Elijah the rest of his life? Who are buried in the graves with numbered stones at Elmwood and Mount Hope cemeteries? Did Charles Paine burn the depot down? Some say Paine milked the railroad dry (his salary was more than three times higher than that of any other railroad president in Vermont), but he has always had his defenders, who maintain that at worst he was an inept administrator of railroad affairs and a victim of business vicissitudes beyond his control. We ponder why the railroad came through Northfield, or why the railroad records burned, and we heft this fact or that, selecting the motive most congenial to our own souls.

A year after he was bounced from the railroad, Charles Paine returned from Waco, Texas, in a coffin. He was fifty-four. Asked to guide construction of the Texas Pacific Railroad, Paine had been checking out the proposed route when he was stricken with a fatal case of dysentery. The directors of the Vermont Central Railroad attended his funeral, and this most prominent citizen of Northfield was buried across the street from his house, in front of the church (now the United Church), which he had given the money for. A marble shaft marked his grave on the hill overlooking Main Street and the common. Evidently, Charles Paine was still thought a lot of, publicly. Did he burn the depot down?

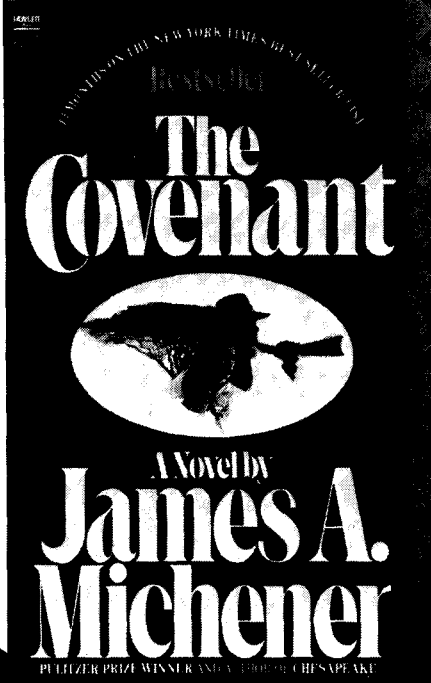
Lurenda Stevens, a beautiful woman who worked at the Paine woolen mill, was reputed to be Charles's mistress. He built her a nice brick house on South Main Street, and gave her other property through the years. Most of her family were in his employ. Charles and Lurenda never married. Courage, discretion, effrontery, and money may have helped Charles, the church-giver, to maintain this liaison, which the times did not condone. Rumor had it that Charles's mother thought her son deserved a mistress but ruled that it was impossible for a Paine to marry a mill girl. No one knows now—if anyone ever did—why Charles never married. Did he contemplate from time to time the people and events of his life, and the irony of his name? It's all loose ends. Probably Charles and Lurenda wanted it that way.

Elmwood Cemetery, at the end of my street, was a pasture that Charles Paine deeded in his will for use as a burial ground. Several years after his death, Paine was moved from the front lawn of the church on the common to Elmwood,

his marble monument taken down and stored away. Paine had a Boston friend who laid out a thousand dollars in cold cash for a tall, elegantly inscribed shaft to be erected at the new grave site. It says something for a man to be remembered a thousand dollars' worth at his second burial. Sometimes I wander up to Elmwood and sit on a marble bench. Off to the left are two obelisks—Paine's and the more modest one of a clergyman and college president. At the opposite end of the cemetery are little granite stones, each hardly a foot high and wide, numbered one to twenty-seven. These are pauper's graves, we suppose, but the town has lost all record of them. Lurenda Stevens, whose fortunes declined after Paine's death, and who at her death in 1880 left behind only a few hundred dollars, is buried in the Stevens family plot. She had to move from the brick house Charles built her to a more modest frame house four doors up Main Street, and she lived there the rest of her life. The first home I could give my wife was the shed, roughed out in our century into an apartment, that connected Lurenda's house with the horse barn. The bench I sit on is simple, restrained—a white marble slab across two blocks of gray Barre granite. One word is incised on it: "Lurenda." That romantic nineteenth-century name, the paupers' numbers, the thousand-dollar rhetoric of Paine's obelisk ("while seeking a path which should unite / The Atlantic with the Pacific Coast, he died") are all equally anonymous. Another loose end: A forty-one-foot-wide strip of land in front of the church, the right-of-way to Charles's first grave, belongs to any heirs he may have, but no one today could locate precisely for them the only bit of Northfield the Paine family still owns.

Northfield is a town I can't keep track of. People are always moving buildings, taking down hills, rigging additions, shifting the dead. They built the Brown Public Library on the Charles Paine property across from the United Church, and the house standing there had to be moved next door, where it's now the American Legion Hall. They dug away a ridge to make a place for the south wing of the depot. Charles Paine's duck pond down by the river was filled in with garbage and granite blocks. They jacked up the United Church, cut it in half, shoved in a middle section, and then built Howe's Hall underneath. The various denominations have shown re-

Five generations, three families, one nation...torn apart.



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markable zeal during the past century and a half for buying one another's churches, hauling them across town, and converting them to new dispensations. Nearly everyone in the cemetery in the early settler Stanton Richardson's meadow has been transplanted elsewhere. A man can't get a hold on his townsmen: they are a restless, ambitious, unsatisfied lot.

Charles Paine, dying eight years before the War Between the States, contributed to Northfield's Civil War memorial. In 1885, the town dragged Paine's original marble tombstone out of storage and incorporated it into a very respectable monument to the war dead. A granite base supports Paine's two marble bases. Then comes the die, the marble block engraved with names, and finally Paine's marble shaft balancing a copper globe on which a copper eagle perches. The town, having to buy only the granite base and the die, made do very well. The composite memorial illustrates that, salvage what you can of the lives overlaying lives in Northfield, it's still a tricky thing to keep the record straight.

One day last summer, the local cable-TV company set up a camera on a tripod in its storefront window, and fed it into the local "news" channel. For a few hours we could turn on the TV and spy on our neighbors driving counterclockwise around the common or crossing the street on errands. Some didn't realize they were being watched, and we immediately recognized the hunched shoulder or tilt of head typical of them in "real life." Others approached the lens, shy or cocky, putting on the faces that we do when looking into an eye that looks back. There was no sound—just a few hours of townsfolk parading silently around Elijah Paine's millstone and the memorial to a war we forget in our private wars with time. As my neighbors, miming the commonest moments of their lives, trooped past, I thought I saw a Civil War veteran slip into the act, saw some of Elmwood's numbered people swell the crowd, but I couldn't prove anything. It was too hard to keep track.

NEARLY EVERY DAY in summer, I bicycle under Harlow Bridge, which is a railroad trestle about a mile and a half south of town. The bridge crosses high above the road and the Dog River where they squeeze between a constriction of ridges. A few yards north of the bridge, a one-room schoolhouse stands

on the bank of the river. School kept there until two years ago, when the town sold the building to a young couple who converted it to a home. On December 11, 1867, the children's classes were disrupted by crashes and screams at Harlow Bridge.

Charles Paine's original construction crew had made the two bridge abutments and the pier between them of granite quarried from a Northfield farm. Today you can still see the carefully squared and fitted granite of the abutments; the original pier was faced with cement and a second pier added in 1930, when Harlow Bridge was last rebuilt. The piers are pointed at either end, and the bases of the upstream "bows" are sheathed with six-foot-high metal plate, fenders against ice floes and flood-borne wreckage. The newer pier stands in the Dog River, but the original rises from roadside weeds, breasting water only in flood time. I stand beside it, ant at the toenail of an elephant, and study the grain of the plank forms that fifty years ago shaped the wet cement. Up on the pylon's shoulders, the cement crumbles to sand-and-pebble scabs. I lie in weeds at the base, and gaze up the flank, canvas-color stained with rust, that tapers into the ironwork. Cloud puffs drift by, and the pylon seems to be toppling constantly. In moments of clear blue, I see unequivocal angles of a mass that won't be budged. I could let warm sun and the shadows of railroad ties falling across my chest press me forever in that spot where my townsmen were crushed.

In 1867 the trestle was made of wood and was enclosed on the sides, so a train crossing Harlow Bridge appeared to be running on top of a twenty-foot-high, 300-foot-long boxcar. Despite their tall, cinder-trapping smokestacks, the wood-burning steam engines frequently did burn their bridges behind them, and on December 7 a train ignited Harlow Bridge. An arch of fire sifted flaming struts and beams into the Dog River with splashes and hissing steam. The iron track writhed out of shape and broke through its own trestle.

The Vermont Central's missing link at the Dog River gave the Rutland Road an unexpected advantage in competing for the Burlington-to-Boston-or-New-York traffic. The Vermont Central set a hundred men to rebuilding Harlow Bridge, while maintaining regular train schedules as best it could. Passengers taking the Vermont Central through Northfield

had a choice of ways to change trains at Harlow Bridge: they could sway over the abyss on a makeshift walkway or slither down one icy hill, cross the Dog River over a nearby bridge, and clamber up the other icy hill. Pressure was on to complete Harlow Bridge, but nothing explains what happened there four days after the bridge burned.

A work routine had been quickly established: an engine, a tender, and a crew car shunted the mile and a half from the depot to Harlow Bridge. The work train always backed up from the town to save time, and to allow flatcars of construction material to be brought right up to the abutment. On the third day of work, the crew went in to Northfield for lunch. At one o'clock, the bell clanged them back to the train; some came slowly, not very eager to be out again in the bitter cold. Francis B. Abbott, the engineer, backed the train toward Harlow Bridge, building up tremendous, inexplicable speed on a grade rising fifty feet to the mile. By the first curve out, the men grew uneasy; at the second curve, they knew the boiler-rattling speed was dangerous. Workmen jumped up and spun the brake wheels of the crew car and the tender; Horace H. Locklin, assistant superintendent of the Vermont Central, leaned over the platform at the end of the crew car and waved desperately for the engineer to slow down; the fireman pegged a piece of wood at Abbott to get his attention. The engineer seemed in a trance until the wood woke him up to a world gone horribly wrong. He reversed the engines to full forward. Metal squealed. Drive wheels and braked undercarriages skied through a surf of their own sparks.

Men began jumping from the train as it approached the abyss, but not many had time to squirm through the two narrow doors or through the glass-spiked frames of smashed windows. The crew car shot past the abutment, men still leaping. The coupling cracked, and the car, twisting onto its side, nosedived. The hot wood stove broke loose and careened through the men, spewing red coals. Twenty-five feet down, the car hit a ledge and broke in two. The roof sheared off and sailed downhill. The rear half of the car crashed onto the men and the wreckage that had been spilled from the front half, and then bounced sixty feet to the west bank of the Dog River. Children down in the school looked out as the tender went over; the coupling

held for a moment, then snapped. The tender dropped onto the ledge, landing on a large fallen bridge timber that had already squashed several men.

Abbott had jumped from the engine, which stopped at the very edge of the chasm. John Gregory, who in 1876 compiled the *Centennial Proceedings and Historical Incidents of the Early Settlers of Northfield, Vt.*, tells us that the engine "had gone so far that a perpendicular line dropped from the flange of the driver, carried it four feet beyond the abutment." When Abbott realized that the engine, still in full-forward throttle, was not going over, he leaped aboard again before it could race uncontrolled through Northfield. He went like hell for help.

An engine backed up from Northfield and tried to pull the tender off the trapped men, but the rope snapped, and the tender smashed down again like a pestle in a mortar. The men in the rear half of the car that plunged all the way to the riverbank had a better chance of surviving than those under the tender on the ledge. Eighteen were killed, about forty injured. Seventeen doctors came from four towns. The victims were carried across the Dog River to the schoolhouse and to farms in the area, and then to the hotel in Northfield, which became a hospital. Teams and sleighs brought stacks of bodies to an improvised "dead house" in Engine House Number One.

The subsequent investigation never determined why, on a day near Christmas, Francis B. Abbott sped eighteen men to their deaths. There was a skein of accusation. Some said Abbott had been edgy because a Major Tenny, master bridge builder, had been riding in the cab (against railroad regulations) and had been pushing to get his men back to the afternoon's work. Innuendos float around town to this day about Abbott bearing a grudge of some kind that led to the Harlow Bridge disaster. The railroad was criticized for not blocking the track in front of the abutment, even though the roadbed was on a rising grade. The railroad fired Abbott, an employee of fifteen years; Abbott sold his farm in Northfield, moved seven miles south to Roxbury, and died in New Hampshire. He was forty at the time of the accident, and had thirty-six more years to meditate (if he was the type) on the men maimed and killed at Harlow Bridge.

Elijah Paine built a gristmill almost two centuries ago beside a ravine that

35,000 years earlier had been under two miles of ice; 400 million years before that the ravine's slate was a fine sediment settling in deep ocean. In Northfield we look at ourselves as an exemplum from historical geology, and the few crushed lives at Harlow Bridge are as insignificant as our own. That is one true half of the story. The other half is that the land may gently form in those who reflect on it the compassion of the long perspective. Every day we make temporal judgments on Paines and Abbotts and ourselves, and sometimes refrain from ultimate statements in a world where even the firmest continent drifts. Rather than discuss it further, a task too diffi-



cult, we tear down the dangerous half-chimney in the old summer kitchen; we pour a new foundation and replace the sills; we repair the back porch—being restless, loving, unsatisfied citizens.

I SNOWSHOE ONE WINTER night beside the track Abbott dashed to town on to announce the Harlow Bridge catastrophe. Snow lies deep and fluffy on the ground, and I hug the rail to take advantage of the firmer base the railroad's track brush has packed in the past few weeks. It snows small, dry, serious flakes, and the rails seem like two straight tunnels that moles with a purpose have raised. Woods and willow thickets fade out or darken into splotches as squalls within the larger storm bear down or sweep on. I become mes-

merized by my own breathing and by the rhythmic squeak of snowshoes compressing new powder. Deep within the parka that is deep within the storm I am an animal, wintering.

Northfield is on the longest grade of the railroad between Burlington and White River. We who live here feel in floorboards and through sidewalks the vibration of a five-engine freight grinding up from the north ten minutes before the train appears. Prolonged blats of the horn count off the crossings. This night, trudging along the tracks, I sense the quivering of land and air that will become a train. I step between the rails, the tails of my snowshoes slashing the soft hump, clicking on metal. I hear the level churning of the diesels, snow-muted and not far off, then the horn signaling for the depot crossing beyond the next bend. A nimbus of quavering light glows at the curve, and grows. Dark particles slant in strakes, gust into whirlpools, and I am hypnotized. This is the chaos of atoms cheerful Democritus saw, each thing swirling into being, unraveling. I stay between the tracks, lifting one webbed foot in front of the other. Keep a stable disposition, said Democritus. Accept nature's diversity. From each change, extract your satisfaction. The light, turning into the far end of the curve, revolves tree shadows like spokes. I walk down a kaleidoscope: flakes coalesce into a mill wheel, disperse into people marching around the Civil War memorial, each thing falling into its place for this moment. The diesel's headlamp swings out of the curve, scything snow. I stand, as I have always wanted to, between the trembling tracks, staring into the glaring eye that blots out the universe as thoroughly as darkness. The roadbed throbs. Before my outline can organize itself for the engineer, I step aside. The Montreal Amtrak swoops by in a glittering whirlwind. Yellow squares flick past like slides someone flashes on a screen when searching for the right one. Buffeted in eddies from the last car, I whiff hot undercarriage grease, upholstery, generators, dining car—smells flashing me back to steam engines and my childhood in Maine—all that epitomizes train and the irretrievable past. The red lights on the last car wink out. I am left inside the storm, walking into my own breath.

—Floyd C. Stuart

Floyd C. Stuart is a poet and essayist.

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The police and neighborhood safety

BROKEN WINDOWS

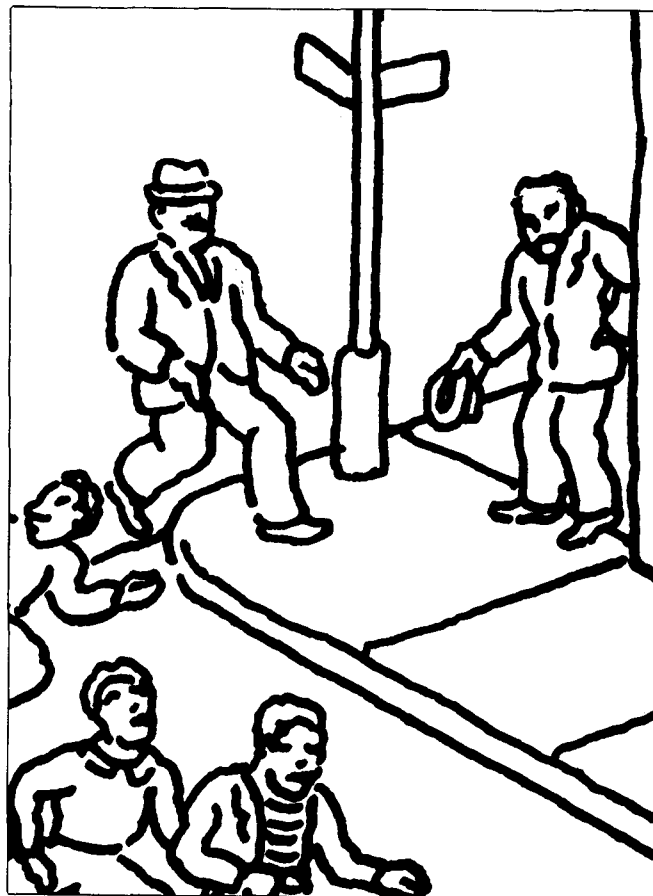
BY JAMES Q. WILSON AND GEORGE L. KELLING

IN THE MID-1970S, THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY ANNOUNCED a "Safe and Clean Neighborhoods Program," designed to improve the quality of community life in twenty-eight cities. As part of that program, the state provided money to help cities take police officers out of their patrol cars and assign them to walking beats. The governor and other state officials were enthusiastic about using foot patrol as a way of cutting crime, but many police chiefs were skeptical. Foot patrol, in their eyes, had been pretty much discredited. It reduced the mobility of the police, who thus had difficulty responding to citizen calls for service, and it weakened headquarters control over patrol officers.

Many police officers also disliked foot patrol, but for different reasons: it was hard work, it kept them outside on cold, rainy nights, and it reduced their chances for making a "good pinch." In some departments, assigning officers to foot patrol had been used as a form of punishment. And academic experts on policing doubted that foot patrol would have any impact on crime rates; it was, in the opinion of most, little more than a sop to public opinion. But since the state was paying for it, the local authorities were willing to go along.

Five years after the program started, the Police Foundation, in Washington, D.C., published an evaluation of the foot-patrol project. Based on its analysis of a carefully controlled experiment carried out chiefly in Newark, the foundation concluded, to the surprise of hardly anyone, that foot patrol had not reduced crime rates. But residents of the foot-patrolled neighborhoods seemed to feel more secure than persons in other areas, tended to believe that crime had been reduced, and seemed to take fewer steps to protect themselves from crime (staying at home with the doors locked, for example). Moreover, citizens in the foot-patrol areas had a more favorable opinion of the police than did those living elsewhere. And officers walking beats had higher morale, greater job satisfaction, and a more favorable attitude toward citizens in their neighborhoods than did officers assigned to patrol cars.

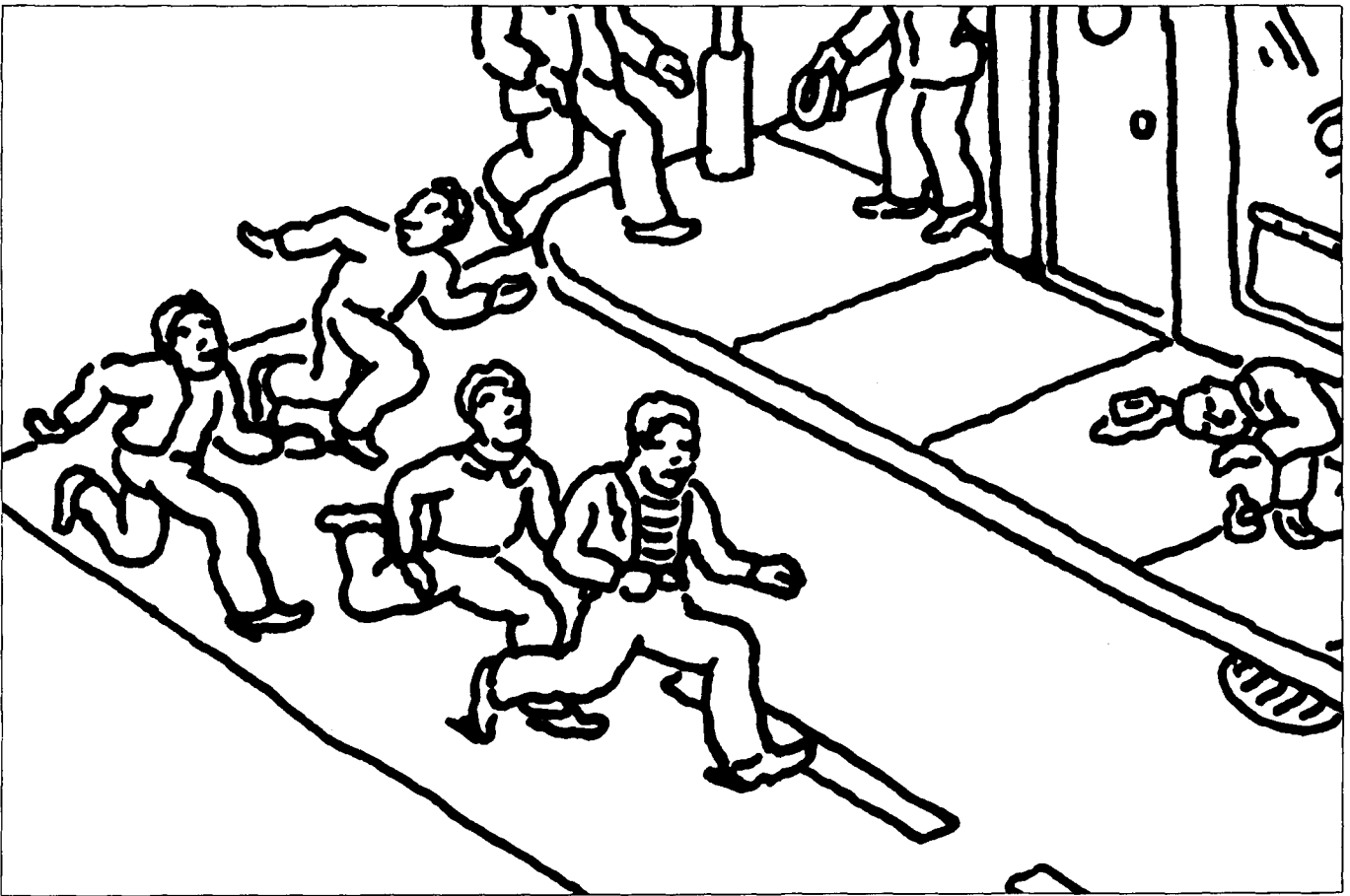
These findings may be taken as evidence that the skept-



tics were right—foot patrol has no effect on crime; it merely fools the citizens into thinking that they are safer. But in our view, and in the view of the authors of the Police Foundation study (of whom Kelling was one), the citizens of Newark were not fooled at all. They knew what the foot-patrol officers were doing, they knew it was different from what motorized officers do, and they knew that having officers walk beats did in fact make their neighborhoods safer.

But how can a neighborhood be "safer" when the crime rate has not gone down—in fact, may have gone up? Finding the answer requires first that we understand what most often frightens people in public places. Many citizens, of course, are primarily frightened by crime, especially crime involving a sudden, violent attack by a stranger. This risk is very real, in Newark as in many large cities. But we tend to overlook or forget another source of fear—

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the fear of being bothered by disorderly people. Not violent people, nor, necessarily, criminals, but disreputable or obstreperous or unpredictable people: panhandlers, drunks, addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers, the mentally disturbed.

What foot-patrol officers did was to elevate, to the extent they could, the level of public order in these neighborhoods. Though the neighborhoods were predominantly black and the foot patrolmen were mostly white, this "order-maintenance" function of the police was performed to the general satisfaction of both parties.

One of us (Kelling) spent many hours walking with Newark foot-patrol officers to see how they defined "order" and what they did to maintain it. One beat was typical: a busy but dilapidated area in the heart of Newark, with many abandoned buildings, marginal shops (several of which prominently displayed knives and straight-edged razors in their windows), one large department store, and, most important, a train station and several major bus stops. Though the area was run-down, its streets were filled with people, because it was a major transportation center. The good order of this area was important not only to those who lived and worked there but also to many others, who had to move through it on their way home, to supermarkets, or to factories.

The people on the street were primarily black; the officer who walked the street was white. The people were

made up of "regulars" and "strangers." Regulars included both "decent folk" and some drunks and derelicts who were always there but who "knew their place." Strangers were, well, strangers, and viewed suspiciously, sometimes apprehensively. The officer—call him Kelly—knew who the regulars were, and they knew him. As he saw his job, he was to keep an eye on strangers, and make certain that the disreputable regulars observed some informal but widely understood rules. Drunks and addicts could sit on the stoops, but could not lie down. People could drink on side streets, but not at the main intersection. Bottles had to be in paper bags. Talking to, bothering, or begging from people waiting at the bus stop was strictly forbidden. If a dispute erupted between a businessman and a customer, the businessman was assumed to be right, especially if the customer was a stranger. If a stranger loitered, Kelly would ask him if he had any means of support and what his business was; if he gave unsatisfactory answers, he was sent on his way. Persons who broke the informal rules, especially those who bothered people waiting at bus stops, were arrested for vagrancy. Noisy teenagers were told to keep quiet.

These rules were defined and enforced in collaboration with the "regulars" on the street. Another neighborhood might have different rules, but these, everybody understood, were the rules for *this* neighborhood. If someone violated them, the regulars not only turned to Kelly for

help but also ridiculed the violator. Sometimes what Kelly did could be described as "enforcing the law," but just as often it involved taking informal or extralegal steps to help protect what the neighborhood had decided was the appropriate level of public order. Some of the things he did probably would not withstand a legal challenge.

A determined skeptic might acknowledge that a skilled foot-patrol officer can maintain order but still insist that this sort of "order" has little to do with the real sources of community fear—that is, with violent crime. To a degree, that is true. But two things must be borne in mind. First, outside observers should not assume that they know how much of the anxiety now endemic in many big-city neighborhoods stems from a fear of "real" crime and how much from a sense that the street is disorderly, a source of distasteful, worrisome encounters. The people of Newark, to judge from their behavior and their remarks to interviewers, apparently assign a high value to public order, and feel relieved and reassured when the police help them maintain that order.

SECOND, AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL, DISORDER AND crime are usually inextricably linked, in a kind of developmental sequence. Social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken *and is left unrepaired*, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. This is as true in nice neighborhoods as in run-down ones. Window-breaking does not necessarily occur on a large scale because some areas are inhabited by determined window-breakers whereas others are populated by window-lovers; rather, one unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares, and so breaking more windows costs nothing. (It has always been fun.)

Philip Zimbardo, a Stanford psychologist, reported in 1969 on some experiments testing the broken-window theory. He arranged to have an automobile without license plates parked with its hood up on a street in the Bronx and a comparable automobile on a street in Palo Alto, California. The car in the Bronx was attacked by "vandals" within ten minutes of its "abandonment." The first to arrive were a family—father, mother, and young son—who removed the radiator and battery. Within twenty-four hours, virtually everything of value had been removed. Then random destruction began—windows were smashed, parts torn off, upholstery ripped. Children began to use the car as a playground. Most of the adult "vandals" were well-dressed, apparently clean-cut whites. The car in Palo Alto sat untouched for more than a week. Then Zimbardo smashed part of it with a sledgehammer. Soon, passersby were joining in. Within a few hours, the car had been turned upside down and utterly destroyed. Again, the "vandals" appeared to be primarily respectable whites.

Untended property becomes fair game for people out for fun or plunder, and even for people who ordinarily would not dream of doing such things and who probably consider

themselves law-abiding. Because of the nature of community life in the Bronx—its anonymity, the frequency with which cars are abandoned and things are stolen or broken, the past experience of "no one caring"—vandalism begins much more quickly than it does in staid Palo Alto, where people have come to believe that private possessions are cared for, and that mischievous behavior is costly. But vandalism can occur anywhere once communal barriers—the sense of mutual regard and the obligations of civility—are lowered by actions that seem to signal that "no one cares."

We suggest that "untended" behavior also leads to the breakdown of community controls. A stable neighborhood of families who care for their homes, mind each other's children, and confidently frown on unwanted intruders can change, in a few years or even a few months, to an inhospitable



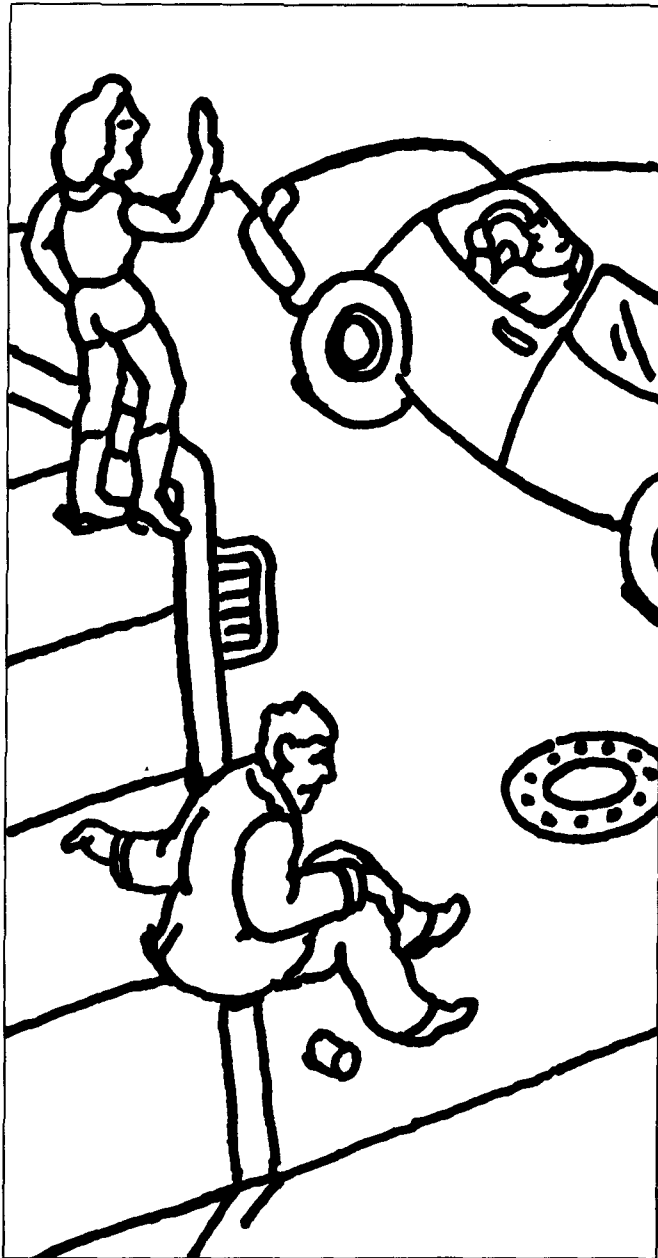


table and frightening jungle. A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, a window is smashed. Adults stop scolding rowdy children; the children, emboldened, become more rowdy. Families move out, unattached adults move in. Teenagers gather in front of the corner store. The merchant asks them to move; they refuse. Fights occur. Litter accumulates. People start drinking in front of the grocery; in time, an inebriate slumps to the sidewalk and is allowed to sleep it off. Pedestrians are approached by panhandlers.

At this point it is not inevitable that serious crime will flourish or violent attacks on strangers will occur. But many residents will think that crime, especially violent crime, is on the rise, and they will modify their behavior accordingly. They will use the streets less often, and when on the streets will stay apart from their fellows, moving

with averted eyes, silent lips, and hurried steps. "Don't get involved." For some residents, this growing atomization will matter little, because the neighborhood is not their "home" but "the place where they live." Their interests are elsewhere; they are cosmopolitans. But it will matter greatly to other people, whose lives derive meaning and satisfaction from local attachments rather than worldly involvement; for them, the neighborhood will cease to exist except for a few reliable friends whom they arrange to meet.

Such an area is vulnerable to criminal invasion. Though it is not inevitable, it is more likely that here, rather than in places where people are confident they can regulate public behavior by informal controls, drugs will change hands, prostitutes will solicit, and cars will be stripped. That the drunks will be robbed by boys who do it as a lark, and the prostitutes' customers will be robbed by men who do it purposefully and perhaps violently. That muggings will occur.

Among those who often find it difficult to move away from this are the elderly. Surveys of citizens suggest that the elderly are much less likely to be the victims of crime than younger persons, and some have inferred from this that the well-known fear of crime voiced by the elderly is an exaggeration: perhaps we ought not to design special programs to protect older persons; perhaps we should even try to talk them out of their mistaken fears. This argument misses the point. The prospect of a confrontation with an obstreperous teenager or a drunken panhandler can be as fear-inducing for defenseless persons as the prospect of meeting an actual robber; indeed, to a defenseless person, the two kinds of confrontation are often indistinguishable. Moreover, the lower rate at which the elderly are victimized is a measure of the steps they have already taken—chiefly, staying behind locked doors—to minimize the risks they face. Young men are more frequently attacked than older women, not because they are easier or more lucrative targets but because they are on the streets more.

Nor is the connection between disorderliness and fear made only by the elderly. Susan Estrich, of the Harvard Law School, has recently gathered together a number of surveys on the sources of public fear. One, done in Portland, Oregon, indicated that three fourths of the adults interviewed cross to the other side of a street when they see a gang of teenagers; another survey, in Baltimore, discovered that nearly half would cross the street to avoid even a single strange youth. When an interviewer asked people in a housing project where the most dangerous spot was, they mentioned a place where young persons gathered to drink and play music, despite the fact that not a single crime had occurred there. In Boston public housing projects, the greatest fear was expressed by persons living in the buildings where disorderliness and incivility, not crime, were the greatest. Knowing this helps one understand the significance of such otherwise harmless displays

as subway graffiti. As Nathan Glazer has written, the proliferation of graffiti, even when not obscene, confronts the subway rider with the "inescapable knowledge that the environment he must endure for an hour or more a day is uncontrolled and uncontrollable, and that anyone can invade it to do whatever damage and mischief the mind suggests."

In response to fear, people avoid one another, weakening controls. Sometimes they call the police. Patrol cars arrive, an occasional arrest occurs, but crime continues and disorder is not abated. Citizens complain to the police chief, but he explains that his department is low on personnel and that the courts do not punish petty or first-time offenders. To the residents, the police who arrive in squad cars are either ineffective or uncaring; to the police, the residents are animals who deserve each other. The citizens may soon stop calling the police, because "they can't do anything."

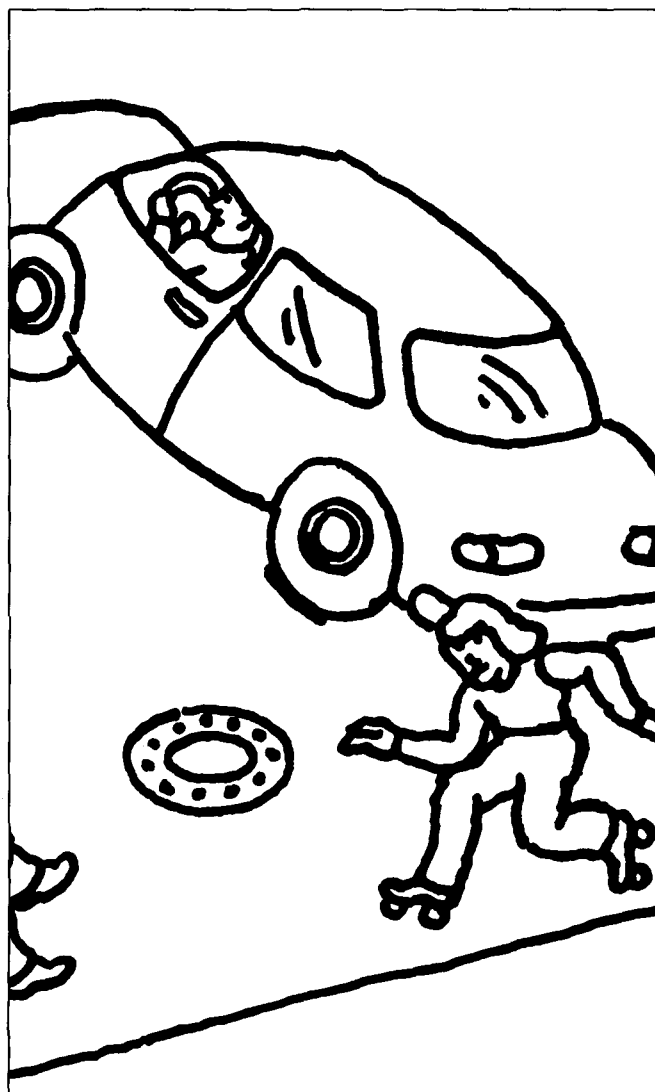
The process we call urban decay has occurred for centuries in every city. But what is happening today is different in at least two important respects. First, in the period before, say, World War II, city dwellers—because of money costs, transportation difficulties, familial and church connections—could rarely move away from neighborhood problems. When movement did occur, it tended to be along public-transit routes. Now mobility has become exceptionally easy for all but the poorest or those who are blocked by racial prejudice. Earlier crime waves had a kind of built-in self-correcting mechanism: the determination of a neighborhood or community to reassert control over its turf. Areas in Chicago, New York, and Boston would experience crime and gang wars, and then normalcy would return, as the families for whom no alternative residences were possible reclaimed their authority over the streets.

Second, the police in this earlier period assisted in that reassertion of authority by acting, sometimes violently, on behalf of the community. Young toughs were roughed up, people were arrested "on suspicion" or for vagrancy, and prostitutes and petty thieves were routed. "Rights" were something enjoyed by decent folk, and perhaps also by the serious professional criminal, who avoided violence and could afford a lawyer.

This pattern of policing was not an aberration or the result of occasional excess. From the earliest days of the nation, the police function was seen primarily as that of a night watchman: to maintain order against the chief threats to order—fire, wild animals, and disreputable behavior. Solving crimes was viewed not as a police responsibility but as a private one. In the March, 1969, *Atlantic*, one of us (Wilson) wrote a brief account of how the police role had slowly changed from maintaining order to fighting crimes. The change began with the creation of private detectives (often ex-criminals), who worked on a contingency-fee basis for individuals who had suffered losses. In time, the detectives were absorbed into municipal police

agencies and paid a regular salary; simultaneously, the responsibility for prosecuting thieves was shifted from the aggrieved private citizen to the professional prosecutor. This process was not complete in most places until the twentieth century.

In the 1960s, when urban riots were a major problem, social scientists began to explore carefully the order-maintenance function of the police, and to suggest ways of improving it—not to make streets safer (its original function) but to reduce the incidence of mass violence. Order-maintenance became, to a degree, coterminous with "community relations." But, as the crime wave that began in the early 1960s continued without abatement throughout the decade and into the 1970s, attention shifted to the role of the police as crime-fighters. Studies of police behavior ceased, by and large, to be accounts of the order-maintenance function and became, instead, efforts to propose and test ways whereby the police could solve more crimes, make more arrests, and gather better evidence. If these things could be done, social scientists assumed, citizens would be less fearful.



A GREAT DEAL WAS ACCOMPLISHED DURING THIS transition, as both police chiefs and outside experts emphasized the crime-fighting function in their plans, in the allocation of resources, and in deployment of personnel. The police may well have become better crime-fighters as a result. And doubtless they remained aware of their responsibility for order. But the link between order-maintenance and crime-prevention, so obvious to earlier generations, was forgotten.

That link is similar to the process whereby one broken window becomes many. The citizen who fears the ill-smelling drunk, the rowdy teenager, or the importuning beggar is not merely expressing his distaste for unseemly behavior; he is also giving voice to a bit of folk wisdom that happens to be a correct generalization—namely, that serious street crime flourishes in areas in which disorderly behavior goes unchecked. The unchecked panhandler is, in effect, the first broken window. Muggers and robbers, whether opportunistic or professional, believe they reduce their chances of being caught or even identified if they operate on streets where potential victims are already intimidated by prevailing conditions. If the neighborhood cannot keep a bothersome panhandler from annoying passersby, the thief may reason, it is even less likely to call the police to identify a potential mugger or to interfere if the mugging actually takes place.

Some police administrators concede that this process occurs, but argue that motorized-patrol officers can deal with it as effectively as foot-patrol officers. We are not so sure. In theory, an officer in a squad car can observe as much as an officer on foot; in theory, the former can talk to as many people as the latter. But the reality of police-citizen encounters is powerfully altered by the automobile. An officer on foot cannot separate himself from the street people; if he is approached, only his uniform and his personality can help him manage whatever is about to happen. And he can never be certain what that will be—a request for directions, a plea for help, an angry denunciation, a teasing remark, a confused babble, a threatening gesture.

In a car, an officer is more likely to deal with street people by rolling down the window and looking at them. The door and the window exclude the approaching citizen; they are a barrier. Some officers take advantage of this barrier, perhaps unconsciously, by acting differently if in the car than they would on foot. We have seen this countless times. The police car pulls up to a corner where teenagers are gathered. The window is rolled down. The officer stares at the youths. They stare back. The officer says to one, "C'mere." He saunters over, conveying to his friends by his elaborately casual style the idea that he is not intimidated by authority. "What's your name?" "Chuck." "Chuck who?" "Chuck Jones." "What'ya doing, Chuck?" "Nothin'." "Got a P.O. [parole officer]?" "Nah." "Sure?" "Yeah." "Stay out of trouble, Chuckie." Meanwhile, the other boys laugh and exchange comments among themselves, probably at the officer's expense. The officer stares

harder. He cannot be certain what is being said, nor can he join in and, by displaying his own skill at street banter, prove that he cannot be "put down." In the process, the officer has learned almost nothing, and the boys have decided the officer is an alien force who can safely be disregarded, even mocked.

Our experience is that most citizens like to talk to a police officer. Such exchanges give them a sense of importance, provide them with the basis for gossip, and allow them to explain to the authorities what is worrying them (whereby they gain a modest but significant sense of having "done something" about the problem). You approach a person on foot more easily, and talk to him more readily, than you do a person in a car. Moreover, you can more easily retain some anonymity if you draw an officer aside for a private chat. Suppose you want to pass on a tip about who is stealing handbags, or who offered to sell you a stolen TV. In the inner city, the culprit, in all likelihood, lives nearby. To walk up to a marked patrol car and lean in the window is to convey a visible signal that you are a "fink."

The essence of the police role in maintaining order is to reinforce the informal control mechanisms of the community itself. The police cannot, without committing extraordinary resources, provide a substitute for that informal control. On the other hand, to reinforce those natural forces the police must accommodate them. And therein lies the problem.

SHOULD POLICE ACTIVITY ON THE STREET BE SHAPED, in important ways, by the standards of the neighborhood rather than by the rules of the state? Over the past two decades, the shift of police from order-maintenance to law-enforcement has brought them increasingly under the influence of legal restrictions, provoked by media complaints and enforced by court decisions and departmental orders. As a consequence, the order-maintenance functions of the police are now governed by rules developed to control police relations with suspected criminals. This is, we think, an entirely new development. For centuries, the role of the police as watchmen was judged primarily not in terms of its compliance with appropriate procedures but rather in terms of its attaining a desired objective. The objective was order, an inherently ambiguous term but a condition that people in a given community recognized when they saw it. The means were the same as those the community itself would employ, if its members were sufficiently determined, courageous, and authoritative. Detecting and apprehending criminals, by contrast, was a means to an end, not an end in itself; a judicial determination of guilt or innocence was the hoped-for result of the law-enforcement mode. From the first, the police were expected to follow rules defining that process, though states differed in how stringent the rules should be. The criminal-apprehension process was always understood to involve individual rights, the violation of which was unac-

ceptable because it meant that the violating officer would be acting as a judge and jury—and that was not his job. Guilt or innocence was to be determined by universal standards under special procedures.

Ordinarily, no judge or jury ever sees the persons caught up in a dispute over the appropriate level of neighborhood order. That is true not only because most cases are handled informally on the street but also because no universal standards are available to settle arguments over disorder, and thus a judge may not be any wiser or more effective than a police officer. Until quite recently in many states, and even today in some places, the police make arrests on such charges as “suspicious person” or “vagrancy” or “public drunkenness”—charges with scarcely any legal meaning. These charges exist not because society wants judges to punish vagrants or drunks but because it wants an officer to have the legal tools to remove undesirable persons from a neighborhood when informal efforts to preserve order in the streets have failed.

Once we begin to think of all aspects of police work as involving the application of universal rules under special procedures, we inevitably ask what constitutes an “undesirable person” and why we should “criminalize” vagrancy or drunkenness. A strong and commendable desire to see that people are treated fairly makes us worry about allowing the police to rout persons who are undesirable by some vague or parochial standard. A growing and not-so-commendable utilitarianism leads us to doubt that any behavior that does not “hurt” another person should be made illegal. And thus many of us who watch over the police are reluctant to allow them to perform, in the only way they can, a function that every neighborhood desperately wants them to perform.

This wish to “decriminalize” disreputable behavior that “harms no one”—and thus remove the ultimate sanction the police can employ to maintain neighborhood order—is, we think, a mistake. Arresting a single drunk or a single vagrant who has harmed no identifiable person seems unjust, and in a sense it is. But failing to do anything about a score of drunks or a hundred vagrants may destroy an entire community. A particular rule that seems to make sense in the individual case makes no sense when it is made a universal rule and applied to all cases. It makes no sense because it fails to take into account the connection between one broken window left untended and a thousand broken windows. Of course, agencies other than the police could attend to the problems posed by drunks or the mentally ill, but in most communities—especially where the “deinstitutionalization” movement has been strong—they do not.

The concern about equity is more serious. We might agree that certain behavior makes one person more undesirable than another, but how do we ensure that age or skin color or national origin or harmless mannerisms will not also become the basis for distinguishing the undesirable from the desirable? How do we ensure, in short, that

the police do not become the agents of neighborhood bigotry?

We can offer no wholly satisfactory answer to this important question. We are not confident that there *is* a satisfactory answer, except to hope that by their selection, training, and supervision, the police will be inculcated with a clear sense of the outer limit of their discretionary authority. That limit, roughly, is this—the police exist to help regulate behavior, not to maintain the racial or ethnic purity of a neighborhood.

Consider the case of the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago, one of the largest public-housing projects in the country. It is home for nearly 20,000 people, all black, and extends over ninety-two acres along South State Street. It was named after a distinguished black who had been, during the 1940s, chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority. Not long after it opened, in 1962, relations between project residents and the police deteriorated badly. The citizens felt that the police were insensitive or brutal; the police, in turn, complained of unprovoked attacks on them. Some Chicago officers tell of times when they were afraid to enter the Homes. Crime rates soared.

Today, the atmosphere has changed. Police-citizen relations have improved—apparently, both sides learned something from the earlier experience. Recently, a boy stole a purse and ran off. Several young persons who saw the theft voluntarily passed along to the police information on the identity and residence of the thief, and they did this publicly, with friends and neighbors looking on. But problems persist, chief among them the presence of youth gangs that terrorize residents and recruit members in the project. The people expect the police to “do something” about this, and the police are determined to do just that.

But do what? Though the police can obviously make arrests whenever a gang member breaks the law, a gang can form, recruit, and congregate without breaking the law. And only a tiny fraction of gang-related crimes can be solved by an arrest; thus, if an arrest is the only recourse for the police, the residents’ fears will go unassuaged. The police will soon feel helpless, and the residents will again believe that the police “do nothing.” What the police in fact do is to chase known gang members out of the project. In the words of one officer, “We kick ass.” Project residents both know and approve of this. The tacit police-citizen alliance in the project is reinforced by the police view that the cops and the gangs are the two rival sources of power in the area, and that the gangs are not going to win.

None of this is easily reconciled with any conception of due process or fair treatment. Since both residents and gang members are black, race is not a factor. But it could be. Suppose a white project confronted a black gang, or vice versa. We would be apprehensive about the police taking sides. But the substantive problem remains the same: how can the police strengthen the informal social-control mechanisms of natural communities in order to minimize fear in public places? Law enforcement, per se, is no an-

swer. A gang can weaken or destroy a community by standing about in a menacing fashion and speaking rudely to passersby without breaking the law.

WE HAVE DIFFICULTY THINKING ABOUT SUCH MATTERS, not simply because the ethical and legal issues are so complex but because we have become accustomed to thinking of the law in essentially individualistic terms. The law defines *my* rights, punishes *his* behavior, and is applied by *that* officer because of *this* harm. We assume, in thinking this way, that what is good for the individual will be good for the community, and what doesn't matter when it happens to one person won't matter if it happens to many. Ordinarily, those are plausible assumptions. But in cases where behavior that is tolerable to one person is intolerable to many others, the reactions of the others—fear, withdrawal, flight—may ultimately make matters worse for everyone, including the individual who first professed his indifference.

It may be their greater sensitivity to communal as opposed to individual needs that helps explain why the residents of small communities are more satisfied with their police than are the residents of similar neighborhoods in big cities. Elinor Ostrom and her co-workers at Indiana University compared the perception of police services in two poor, all-black Illinois towns—Phoenix and East Chicago Heights—with those of three comparable all-black neighborhoods in Chicago. The level of criminal victimization and the quality of police-community relations appeared to be about the same in the towns and the Chicago neighborhoods. But the citizens living in their own villages were much more likely than those living in the Chicago neighborhoods to say that they do not stay at home for fear of crime, to agree that the local police have “the right to take any action necessary” to deal with problems, and to agree that the police “look out for the needs of the average citizen.” It is possible that the residents and the police of the small towns saw themselves as engaged in a collaborative effort to maintain a certain standard of communal life, whereas those of the big city felt themselves to be simply requesting and supplying particular services on an individual basis.

If this is true, how should a wise police chief deploy his meager forces? The first answer is that nobody knows for certain, and the most prudent course of action would be to try further variations on the Newark experiment, to see more precisely what works in what kinds of neighborhoods. The second answer is also a hedge—many aspects of order-maintenance in neighborhoods can probably best be handled in ways that involve the police minimally, if at all. A busy, bustling shopping center and a quiet, well-tended suburb may need almost no visible police presence. In both cases, the ratio of respectable to disreputable people is ordinarily so high as to make informal social control effective.

Even in areas that are in jeopardy from disorderly elements, citizen action without substantial police involvement may be sufficient. Meetings between teenagers who like to hang out on a particular corner and adults who want to use that corner might well lead to an amicable agreement on a set of rules about how many people can be allowed to congregate, where, and when.

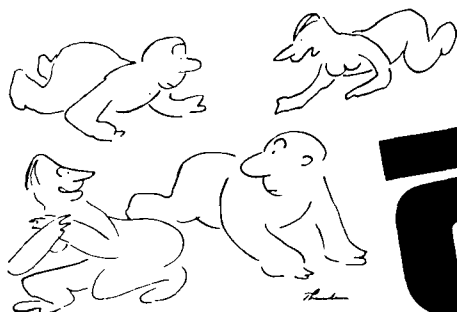
Where no understanding is possible—or if possible, not observed—citizen patrols may be a sufficient response. There are two traditions of communal involvement in maintaining order. One, that of the “community watchmen,” is as old as the first settlement of the New World. Until well into the nineteenth century, volunteer watchmen, not policemen, patrolled their communities to keep order. They did so, by and large, without taking the law into their own hands—without, that is, punishing persons or using force. Their presence deterred disorder or alerted the community to disorder that could not be deterred. There are hundreds of such efforts today in communities all across the nation. Perhaps the best known is that of the Guardian Angels, a group of unarmed young persons in distinctive berets and T-shirts, who first came to public attention when they began patrolling the New York City subways but who claim now to have chapters in more than thirty American cities. Unfortunately, we have little information about the effect of these groups on crime. It is possible, however, that whatever their effect on crime, citizens find their presence reassuring, and that they thus contribute to maintaining a sense of order and civility.

The second tradition is that of the “vigilante.” Rarely a feature of the settled communities of the East, it was primarily to be found in those frontier towns that grew up in advance of the reach of government. More than 350 vigilante groups are known to have existed; their distinctive feature was that their members did take the law into their own hands, by acting as judge, jury, and often executioner as well as policeman. Today, the vigilante movement is conspicuous by its rarity, despite the great fear expressed by citizens that the older cities are becoming “urban frontiers.” But some community-watchmen groups have skirted the line, and others may cross it in the future. An ambiguous case, reported in *The Wall Street Journal*, involved a citizens' patrol in the Silver Lake area of Belleville, New Jersey. A leader told the reporter, “We look for outsiders.” If a few teenagers from outside the neighborhood enter it, “we ask them their business,” he said. “If they say they're going down the street to see Mrs. Jones, fine, we let them pass. But then we follow them down the block to make sure they're really going to see Mrs. Jones.”

THOUGH CITIZENS CAN DO A GREAT DEAL, THE POLICE are plainly the key to order-maintenance. For one thing, many communities, such as the Robert Taylor Homes, cannot do the job by themselves. For another, no citizen in a neighborhood, even an organized one, is like-

America could never get
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ly to feel the sense of responsibility that wearing a badge confers. Psychologists have done many studies on why people fail to go to the aid of persons being attacked or seeking help, and they have learned that the cause is not "apathy" or "selfishness" but the absence of some plausible grounds for feeling that one must personally accept responsibility. Ironically, avoiding responsibility is easier when a lot of people are standing about. On streets and in public places, where order is so important, many people are likely to be "around," a fact that reduces the chance of any one person acting as the agent of the community. The police officer's uniform singles him out as a person who must accept responsibility if asked. In addition, officers, more easily than their fellow citizens, can be expected to distinguish between what is necessary to protect the safety of the street and what merely protects its ethnic purity.

But the police forces of America are losing, not gaining, members. Some cities have suffered substantial cuts in the number of officers available for duty. These cuts are not likely to be reversed in the near future. Therefore, each department must assign its existing officers with great care. Some neighborhoods are so demoralized and crime-ridden as to make foot patrol useless; the best the police can do with limited resources is respond to the enormous number of calls for service. Other neighborhoods are so stable and serene as to make foot patrol unnecessary. The key is to identify neighborhoods at the tipping point—where the public order is deteriorating but not unreclaimable, where the streets are used frequently but by apprehensive people, where a window is likely to be broken at any time, and must quickly be fixed if all are not to be shattered.

Most police departments do not have ways of systematically identifying such areas and assigning officers to them. Officers are assigned on the basis of crime rates (meaning that marginally threatened areas are often stripped so that police can investigate crimes in areas where the situation is hopeless) or on the basis of calls for service (despite the fact that most citizens do not call the police when they are merely frightened or annoyed). To allocate patrol wisely, the department must look at the neighborhoods and decide, from first-hand evidence, where an additional officer will make the greatest difference in promoting a sense of safety.

One way to stretch limited police resources is being tried in some public-housing projects. Tenant organizations hire off-duty police officers for patrol work in their buildings. The costs are not high (at least not per resident), the offi-

cer likes the additional income, and the residents feel safer. Such arrangements are probably more successful than hiring private watchmen, and the Newark experiment helps us understand why. A private security guard may deter crime or misconduct by his presence, and he may go to the aid of persons needing help, but he may well not intervene—that is, control or drive away—someone challenging community standards. Being a sworn officer—a "real cop"—seems to give one the confidence, the sense of duty, and the aura of authority necessary to perform this difficult task.

Patrol officers might be encouraged to go to and from duty stations on public transportation and, while on the bus or subway car, enforce rules about smoking, drinking, disorderly conduct, and the like. The enforcement need involve nothing more than ejecting the offender (the offense, after all, is not one with which a booking officer or a judge wishes to be bothered). Perhaps the random but relentless maintenance of standards on buses would lead to conditions on buses that approximate the level of civility we now take for granted on airplanes.

But the most important requirement is to think that to maintain order in precarious situations is a vital job. The police know this is one of their functions, and they also believe, correctly, that it cannot be done to the exclusion of criminal investigation and responding to calls. We may have encouraged them to suppose, however, on the basis of our oft-repeated concerns about serious, violent crime, that they will be judged exclusively on their capacity as crime-fighters. To the extent that this is the case, police administrators will continue to concentrate police personnel in the highest-crime areas (though not necessarily in the areas most vulnerable to criminal invasion), emphasize their training in the law and criminal apprehension (and not their training in managing street life), and join too quickly in campaigns to decriminalize "harmless" behavior (though public drunkenness, street prostitution, and pornographic displays can destroy a community more quickly than any team of professional burglars).

Above all, we must return to our long-abandoned view that the police ought to protect communities as well as individuals. Our crime statistics and victimization surveys measure individual losses, but they do not measure communal losses. Just as physicians now recognize the importance of fostering health rather than simply treating illness, so the police—and the rest of us—ought to recognize the importance of maintaining, intact, communities without broken windows. □

PLAYING TROMBONE

A SHORT STORY BY NICHOLSON BAKER



THERE ONCE WAS A MINER WHO LIVED IN BANG COUNTY with his wife and son. The miner was very poor, but he made some extra cash evenings and weekends by playing the trombone for weddings and funerals. He kept the trombone locked in a trunk when he wasn't using it.

One night the miner came back drunk from a wedding he had played for and went to sleep without putting away his trombone. Early the next morning he went straight off to work at the strip mine. When the boy saw that his father had forgotten to lock up the instrument, he said, "Mother, could I please play the trombone?" At first his mother hesitated, but finally she said, "All right, but don't tell your father."

So the boy, whose name was Zeno, took the old instrument out of the trunk, along with a worn copy of André Lafosse's *Méthode Complète pour trombone à coulisse*. His mother read Lesson One to him:

The slide being pushed home (first position), put the instrument to your lips as directed in paragraphs IV, V, VII, XI of the foreword. Then, pronouncing the syllable "TU" (which is the natural reflex of a person wishing to expel from the tip of his tongue a small foreign body, a bit of thread or a chip of tobacco) make the instrument speak.

Zeno obediently put the instrument to his lips and said, "TU."

The ensuing note was so loud that a squash on the windowsill exploded.

He blew a second note: the dog, whimpering, wet the rug.

He blew a third note: it whipped all the feathers off the chicken his mother was plucking.

When the feathers had settled, his mother said softly, "Son, how could you blast that squash, embarrass Zip, and denude my roaster with that trombone?"

Zeno said, "I had a feel for it." And all day long he played strange tunes his mother had never heard before.

When his father came home that evening he was peeved. "Someone was playing my trombone," he said. "I could hear it clear over at the mine."

Zeno said, "You left the trombone trunk unlocked last night and I admit I played trombone all day." To show him, Zeno picked up the instrument and hit a note so pure that the big boulder out in their front yard split in half with a great crack, revealing a seam of coal running right through the middle.

The father stood with his hands over his ears and his mouth open. Then he said, "We can use him in the strip mine!"

So Zeno went to work in the mine. He learned to get just the right pitch to turn a whole rock face into rubble. With a certain kind of glissando he could turn it into fine powder. He got two merit raises in one month.

At first his father still played the trombone for weddings and funerals, but soon he got tired of people asking about his son. "Hey," they would say, "I hear your son plays the trombone so well he can blow the leaves right off a white oak." So finally one Saturday he called his son over and said, "Son, I'm not playing this old slushpump anymore,

Nicholson Baker has studied at the Eastman School of Music and has played bassoon with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra.

because you put me to shame. It's time we traded it in and got you a brand-new trombone."

The owner of the music store was a man with a bow tie named Mr. Shelf. The miner and his son asked to see the best trombone he had.

"So you're the boy plays a pedal B-flat you can hear clear across Bang County," said Mr. Shelf. "I happen to have just the instrument for you." He got up on a small ladder and unhooked a custom Jörg Neuschel trombone that had been slowly rotating on a wire from the ceiling fan. A pastoral scene was etched on the bell. The slide handle was of jasper, and the neck rest was overlaid with ivory. "Very, very nice instrument. No rust anywhere. Years of pleasure."

"It is truly beautiful," said the father. "How much?"

"For this model? You can walk out of here with this model for ninety-nine dollars and ninety-nine cents, with your old instrument in trade. Case and slide grease included."

"Is there an installment plan?" asked the miner.

"Oh, surely," said Mr. Shelf. "Every week you pay me precisely half of what you owe me. There is only one condition." He stuck something that said "Belwin Band Builder TROMBONE" on a stand in front of Zeno and opened it. "You must be able to read music. Play this."

He handed the trombone to Zeno. Zeno looked at the pages in front of him. They were covered with thin horizontal lines and black dots of various kinds. Zeno unlocked the slide, put the mouthpiece to his lips, and said, "TU." The music stand fell over and the cash register sprang open showing NO SALE.

"Aha," said Mr. Shelf, smoothing his hair back into place. "It's as I expected. Lots of raw potential here, but he can't read music. I'm very sorry."

The miner and his son turned to go. But just as they were walking out the door, Mr. Shelf took pity on them, and said, "Wait, I'll tell you what I'll do. For a very nominal fee my daughter, Thama, will teach your son how to read music, and if he shows he can do it, I'll sell him the instrument."

The miner agreed, and from then on Zeno cut across the vast slag heaps every morning to the music store, where the owner's daughter, in a back room filled with hundreds of old instruments, swatches of horsehair, torsos of woodwinds stripped for their keys, used flutepads, battered cases, tiny screwdrivers and tinier screws, sheets of cork, a Bunsen burner, glues and waxes, and many algae-filled, half-evaporated jars of water on the radiators, taught him how to read music. They went over clefs, keys, meter, and tempo markings. The daughter was very nice looking, and by the time Zeno had mastered the fermata he was in love. He played an ancient tune of courtship: a double bass case with brass hinges sprang open. They made a soft bed in it of clarinet swabs and lay there in embrace every morning until Zeno had to go to the strip mine and reduce whole rock faces to rubble.

This continued for some weeks, until one morning the

music-store owner went back to see if he had any antique bassoon bocals for a customer and discovered the two of them in the bass case.

"O sin beyond name, O breach profound!" said Mr. Shelf. He seized a baton that Toscanini had reportedly used and pointed it at the sky. Thunder rolled. "You are forever banned from the music store. I want you and the iniquitous trombone out of my sight. But first know this: I hereby curse you with a Paradox. May it paralyze you at an Inopportune Moment."

"You mean I can have the trombone?" said Zeno, stunned into boldness.

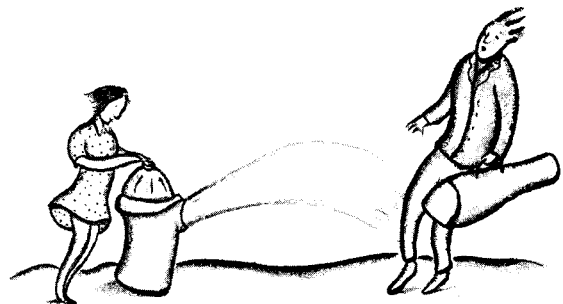
"Go!"

So Zeno went. He wasn't sure what Mr. Shelf's curse was all about, but he knew for certain that he could no longer live in Bang County because of the scandal, so he quit his job at the mines and packed up his étude books. His mother, biting her lip, gave him a leather pouch for his mouthpiece made from an ArtKraft kit. His father said, "Son, we'll miss you at the mine, but it's better you leave and make your mark on the world, because I know you can," and shook his hand. Thama Shelf met him secretly at the bus station, kissed him good-bye, and pressed upon him a copy of Berlioz's *Traité d'orchestration*.

Thus Zeno left on the bus for Mammoth, the nearby metropolis, with his good shoes crammed into his trombone case and an ad ripped from *International Musician* in his shirt pocket. The ad said:

The MAMMOTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION, Inc.
of Mammoth, N.Y.
Announces an Opening for:
PRINCIPAL TROMBONE
An Equal Opportunity Employer

Auditions were being held in two months. Filled with sadness, but with a sense of great things to come, Zeno rode all the way to the metropolis sitting next to a man who thumbed through old gun magazines.



ONCE ARRIVED, HE WANDERED THE STREETS WITH A map. He stopped in front of a dark building where some kids were splashing in the spray of an opened fire hydrant. A girl, seven or so, amused by Zeno's clouded look, daringly deflected some of the silver gush onto his pants leg and trombone case.

"Is this the Conservatory?" Zeno asked. "I want to be a professional musician."

The children stopped splashing and turned toward him. "Turn back," they said, holding up four short index fingers, "O turn back."

Zeno was unfazed. He rented a practice room and played études until the lower part of his face was numb. Week after week he kept at it, long tones, awkward slurs, orchestral excerpts. He embellished his Remington warm-up exercises in strange and artful ways; pianists in adjoining practice rooms sighed and left off playing their Debussy to listen. He attempted to play, and play perfectly, every note that had been written for the trombone.

After a time, however, his rate of improvement began to taper off. He spent five hours working intensively on the solo from *Bolero* and found that he could play it only imperceptibly more beautifully than when he had begun in the morning. The next day he spent on a technically tricky run in *Till Eulenspiegel*, but although his slide sped toward invisibility, although he could play the passage several notches faster than he had heard it done on any recording, he discovered that he was unable, no matter how hard he pushed himself, to continue increasing the velocity. A fortnight before the audition Zeno understood that he was reaching the limits of human achievement.

"Too soon, too soon!" he said, and he rode the culture loop on the bus all day, trying to figure out how to get his playing back on its upward-sloping path. His eye came to rest on a sign in the bus that said, in English and Spanish, "Are you near the end of your rope? Need job help? Legal help? Family counseling? Or just a friendly ear? Call OUT-REACH. 473-4194."

Zeno dialed the number.

"Hi, this is Outreach Operative Mel speaking, may I help you?"

Zeno said, "I play trombone. I have discovered to my dismay that my slide has an infinite number of points between each of its seven positions, making it quite difficult to hit precisely the pitch required in fast passages. Or in slow passages. Also, all music is based on the harmonic series—the fundamental, then the octave, fifth, fourth, major third, minor third, etc., which I believe follows the progression a , $\frac{a}{2}$, $\frac{a}{3}$, $\frac{a}{4}$, $\frac{a}{5}$, etc., always approaching a certain high pitch, but never attaining it. This may be crucial or it may not. Furthermore, I think I'm reaching the limits of human perfectibility on the trombone. That's my curse."

"Okay, now look," said Mel, "let's back up. I want you to take a couple of deep breaths with me. Are you with me? Ready? In, *hoop*, and out, *moof*. In, *hoop*, and out, *moof*. That's it."

Zeno was inhaling tentatively.

"If you want to make real your grief, make it real. Tears are truth. Now let's back *way* up. You feel anxious about your music, am I right? Are you breathing for me? *Moof*. Now let me key in PARADOX and MUSIC on my terminal

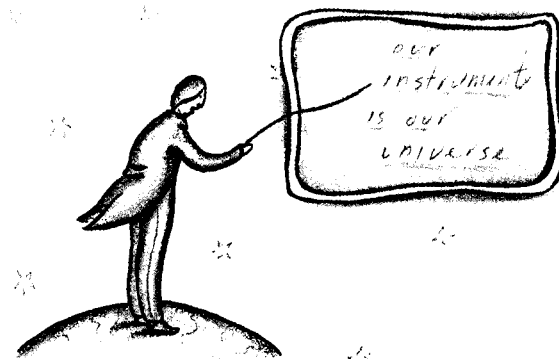
here, and we'll have access to the counseling data-base in a few seconds. Were you laid off from a musical grouping of any kind larger than six players? I can facilitate your claim for unemployment, food stamps . . ."

"That's all right," said Zeno. "It's just this curse thing."

"Wait, here we go. I've got a readout for you. It says SUBJECT WOULD BREATHE EASIER IF HE WERE FAMILIAR WITH WHAT MATHEMATICIANS NOW KNOW ABOUT LIMITS AND INFINITE SERIES, AS WOULD HAVE ZENO OF ELEA HIMSELF. Under POSSIBLE REFERRALS it has one listing, IFPA, which is, hold on, the Institute for Performance Anxiety, on the corner of Plymouth Avenue and Norton. That's a number-fifteen bus, thirty-five cents for off hours, fifty cents for peak hours, or your subway is the orange line to Mantissa. So, how are we feeling? Breathing helped? Hope that conceptual stuff brought you closer to yourself and where you're headed, and hey, why don't you check out the IFPA?"

"Why not?" said Zeno. "Thank you very much."

"Hey, we worked together—thank you."



THE INSTITUTE FOR PERFORMANCE ANXIETY WAS ON the second floor of a decrepit H. H. Richardson building, over a theater showing a Bruce Lee retrospective.

"Would you like our intensive one-day total-immersion seminar?" the receptionist asked.

"Fine," said Zeno. He paid the fee and was given a note pad and a pencil with IFPA embossed on it in gold letters. The receptionist pointed to a room down the hall.

Zeno opened the door and walked in. It was filled with desks, four of them occupied. In the front, pacing back and forth along the blackboard, was a tall man with bony elbows and shoulders and a whistle around his neck. An old upright piano stood in the corner. As soon as Zeno sat down, the Consultant for Performance Anxiety stopped pacing, clapped his hands, blew his whistle, and said, "Let's get started, people." He went over to a manila folder on the piano and leafed through it.

"All right. Is it fair to say that we're all here because as musicians we suffer from Performance Anxiety?" Two of the people nodded. "Good. Now why don't we go around the room and make ourselves known. Say what you play and give us a sketch of your particular affliction."

The first man said, "I'm Lou and I do violin. I get these





dreams all the time where I'm playing a concert and can't see the music, or someone gives me music I've never seen before and tells me I have to perform it in three days, or sometimes I dream I have a really fast passage to play and my hand can't move, no matter how hard I force it, except really slowly."

The Consultant shook his head. "You poor bastard. Next."

"I play the piano," whispered a small woman with dark eyebrows. "My roommate, who doesn't play as well as I do, has secretly implanted jamming transducers in my brain that are activated by Arab satellites, also Toast-R-Ovens. She offered herself, with her giant breasts, the witch, to a trumpet player so that he would rush a solo in the Prokofiev concerto and force me to come in half a measure late. This could all be true."

The Consultant rolled his eyes. "You're a sick bird. Next."

Zeno said, "An owner of a music store let fall on me a Paradoxical Curse at an Inopportune Moment after I fell in love with his daughter. What it means more or less is that as I approach ultimate trombone technique, I find I must approach it by smaller and smaller increments of improvement, and I find that it is perhaps unattainable, the consideration of which gives rise, as you might imagine, to a radical form of Performance Anxiety."

"You have a crucial audition coming up and you are worried you won't make the finals," said the Consultant. "Get to the point. Next."

"Well, um, I'm Maureen?" said Maureen. "And this is really stupid, but I play the flute? And I get real nervous before I have my lesson, so that I can't play the passage the way Mr. Marino wants it, even though I could at home? And so I always start crying in the middle of the lesson, because I'm so frustrated and so sorry about disappointing him, and I've tried yoga but it hasn't helped?"

"It never does, Maureen," said the Consultant sadly. "Next."

"My name's Dave and I play clarinet, but I don't have any anxiety problems at all, I'm just here checking things out for a friend."

"Threadbare, Dave, threadbare," said the Consultant. He blew his whistle and began speaking rapidly. "Fine. Now we've heard the problems and we need solutions. All right! I play the piano myself. First thing you've got to beat into your heads, people, is"—he spun around and started writing on the blackboard—"RELAX AND CONCENTRATE. Or, concentrate and relax. One flows from the other. If you relax, you'll concentrate; if you concentrate, you'll relax. If you're not relaxed while you're playing you can't concentrate; if you're not concentrating on what you're playing, you can't relax. It's as simple as that. Relax and concentrate. Write it down. I've never been able to do it."

He blew the whistle. "Rule two. MUSIC DOESN'T MATTER. Keep saying that to yourself while you play, over and

over, music doesn't matter, music doesn't matter. Space is silent, as Pascal pointed out. The planet Mercury does not go whoosh when it revolves in the boundless inane. *Pace* Kepler, the spheres are not musical."

He stopped pacing and reflected for a moment. "Or are they? Why do you think Mercury, the planet most proximate to our sun, takes eighty-eight days to orbit its flaming neighbor? Isn't it because the piano, the greatest invention of the modern age, has eighty-eight keys? This is no coincidence. Our instrument is our universe. In fact, let me recant: MUSIC DOES MATTER. It is an affront to the eternal silence, people. I mean this sincerely. I myself would make absolutely sure to wear earplugs the day of a concert—I'd take them out (as delicately as possible, naturally) only after I had walked onstage, bowed, and was ready to play. That way the first note I sounded was miraculous: I had recaptured the original revelation of sound, I steered the Steinway among hushed and frozen asteroids. Ecclesiastes says—note this down, people—'Better is a handful with quietness than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.' A handful with quietness, people."

He held his hands out, palms up. The thumb of his right hand hung at a curious angle. He made a fist and resumed his harangue. "Ah, have you ever *felt* the absolute power of, say, an A-flat major triad when it is played on a good piano in the context of absolute silence? Wait! *Felt!* 'Felt' is a partial clue. Who gave a famous tea party in a children's book? The Hatter. And why was the Hatter mad, people? Because felt was used in hat manufacture, and mercury was essential in making felt, which caused brain damage. But here's the key: felt is what tips the hammers of every good piano in the world—the felt hammer is the mediator between my hands and the piano wires—those prison bars, that slanting, silver-gray rain. Once again, mercury and the piano, the piano and mercury. Our instrument is our universe. Everything must lead to it and emanate from it."

Zeno shifted in his seat. The Consultant blew the whistle again. "Where are we? Yes! Rule number three. ACTIVELY DISLIKE YOUR LISTENERS. Cultivate controlled contempt. What do I mean by that? Simply this. If you convince yourself that you are better than your audience, you will cut down on Performance Anxiety. Therefore, while you are waiting in the wings, visualize the average ticket-holder in the audience and run over his flaws. Charity has no place in the concert hall. This hopeless nonentity of a man has come to hear *me* play, you must say, Maureen. Hah! Hah! The wonderful dolt. He can't even carry a tune! He's got his kids all taking Suzuki lessons but they hate and abuse the tiny violins he's bought them. He'll give a standing ovation to anyone famous, he wears a ridiculous hat. That is what has to be going through your mind. What business does he have listening to your exalted art? I guarantee, people, because you temporarily revile your audience, you will bring down the house. This was the technique I used when I played concerts—and I was a very

good pianist. I practiced nine hours a day at the Conservatory. You can still see the burns on the high-register piano keys where I rested my cigarettes. I lived on amphetamines. And it paid off. I won a student competition and was invited to play a solo concert. I had stunning double trills. Tremendous technique. Before the big concert I did three Dexedrine E14s and worked myself up into a state of supreme disdain for my audience, even though my ex-wife and agent were there. The first half I played absolutely perfectly. Not a note missed and faultless phrasing all the way through. Inhumanly good. But when I walked out on-stage after the intermission I felt very disoriented. I was dizzy. Hundreds of separate smells seemed to waft up from the audience, a multitude of perfumes, shoes, mentholated cough drops, the ink on the glossy program notes, everything. My hands were limber and hot; each finger trembled slightly. I started the sonata, but a little way into the first movement my scalp began to tingle and I suddenly could not hear the music my hands were playing. Everything went quiet. All I could hear, people, were the dull percussions of my finger bones hitting the keys, and the tendons on the backs of my hands slipping back and forth in their sheaths, and the icy grinding and snapping in my knuckles and finger joints. I was in terrible shape. But now here comes the good part, people. The sounds were so painful, so paralyzing, that I walked off the stage. I just suddenly lifted my hands off the keyboard, stood up, and walked out. Before the audience knew what hit them I was on the street. I waltzed into a J.C. Penney, and because the prospect of a whole life, *years*, with the memory of my failure in that concert was unbearable, I acquired a Get Acquainted packet—a safety razor and ten blades—and then I sliced the plumbing in both wrists. I was spotted pretty quickly in someone's headlights, squatting in my black tails in back of the Penney's, dripping from the tip of each finger all over their plastic bushes. I still shave with that razor. See?"

The Consultant for Performance Anxiety held out his hands again, and Zeno, craning his neck, saw the two white scars. "Needless to say, I survived, but there was an irreversible consequence. When I cut my right wrist I also severed the nerve to my thumb. I killed it." He tapped the thumb lightly with his left hand to demonstrate. "You see? It doesn't function. Why, why did I expect so much from so little?" He walked over to the piano. "Listen carefully. This is what Performance Anxiety can do to you," he said, and casually, while looking down at the keyboard, he pointed a finger at Zeno. Zeno grabbed his trombone case and began backing toward the door, as if struck by the evil eye.

"Listen. I can still play!" The Consultant sat down at the upright, wiped his eyes, and blew the whistle loudly. He started to play Mozart. Zeno gasped, his hand on the door-knob. The Consultant's playing was wonderful, graceful and effortless. But now and then the limp thumb, dragged across the keys, would make a gentle, ghostly plink of its own, off-key, out of rhythm. "Do you hear him?" said the

Consultant over his music. "I cut his nerve, so he's on his own now, but he still plays."

Zeno left the room. As he walked down the long hall he could still hear the music, softer and softer, with the dead thumb adding feeble accidentals from time to time. He stopped at the receptionist's desk.

"Excuse me," he whispered. "I believe your Consultant for Performance Anxiety has lost his mind."

The receptionist smiled. "Is he telling you about Mercury and suicide and all that?"

"Yes!" Zeno said.

"He goes through the same performance twice a week. We've worked it into our therapy design. We feel that if we can present a case of Performance Anxiety worse than any of yours could ever be, you'll all see your own problems in perspective."

"Scared Straight, or something," said Zeno.

"We think so," said the receptionist.



BACK AT THE CONSERVATORY HE FOUND AN EMPTY practice room and locked himself inside. It was hot. Small wonder that the Consultant had gone slightly crazy: he had spent all his waking life in rooms like this. One wall of the tiny cubicle was covered with acoustical tiles, some of which had been torn off, leaving Van Gogh swirls of purple glue. Cracks and gouges in the plaster of the other walls had been incorporated into elaborately obscene drawings.

Lifting the cover of the piano, Zeno verified that many of the high-register ivories were indeed charred and stained yellow from cigarettes. "Crush Liszt" had been scratched into the piano finish, along with "Death to the Clarinet." Idly Zeno hit an octave on the keyboard: a small spider limped out of the top of the piano. It had lost one leg earlier in the day during an encounter with the miraculous, felt-tipped opening chord of Debussy's *La Cathédrale engloutie*. "What a life," said Zeno, meaning the spider's, mostly. Mindless casualties. Out of a sense of duty and nothing more he assembled his trombone, his gestures instinctive from repetition, and attempted a scale. His tone sounded like a rake on a driveway.

"Forget it. I quit." He banged his fist down on the keyboard (annihilating thereby the brown and wrinkled egg pod the spider had carefully spun to a low-C wire, her last hope) and walked outside.

He boarded a bus, rode to the end of the line, got out, and kept walking. By nightfall he had reached the edge of the city. A moraine sloped up steeply from the valley: in it, Zeno discovered, was a cave. The sign said "Professional Help (also Notary 'Public') Remove Shoes." Zeno obeyed and entered. A Piltdown Man was inside, surrounded by bones and blue Bokharas.

Zeno outlined his troubles. "I'm plateauing out. I'm solitary to the point of misanthropy, I'm fully committed to the trombone, but my playing isn't getting any better. I'm obsessed by the audition. Will I win?"

"Play," croaked the Piltdown Man.

Rather stiffly, Zeno began a thing from Mussorgsky.

The Piltdown rummaged among the bones until he found an elephant scapula. He passed it three times in front of the trombone bell while Zeno played, then tossed it into the fire. As it began to glow, an intricate pattern of cracks became visible. The Piltdown Man studied them closely. His eyelashes fizzed back from the heat. Finally he said, "Bone say *Trust* it say *Trust* it say *Trust* not it say *Trust* not in oracles and prophecy, and all things defiled by hope."

"No good," said Zeno, and in his despondency he yowled once loudly on the trombone. The elephant bone responded by snapping in half in the hands of the startled Piltdown—in the reverberation of the cave the cracking sound lengthened to a sharp whisper: "Jazz!"

"Hey," said the Piltdown Man. Zeno yowled the trombone again.

The two bone shards each cracked: "Jazz! Jazz!"

"That's it!" said Zeno.

"Now popping bone say *Cash! Cash!*" said the Piltdown Man helpfully.

"So I hear," said Zeno. He paid and left.

He dashed back to the practice room, raring to go, ready for anything. When he had slapped together the instrument, he sat on the piano stool and began tapping his foot. *Badap, bap, bap*, he played. "Loosen up, boys and girls, we're learning jazz," he told the trombone, still tapping his foot. *Biddly yoot da doo-wat*. "That's it. This is going to be a breakthrough." *Biddly yoot da doo-woe. Badap; bap. He* checked his watch. "Folks, from now on I'm going to be a great trombonist." *Beeyoody doot doo-wah. Badap, bap, bap.* He crooned encouragement to the trombone between jolts of melody. "Watersmooth, honey. Ultra-Lash. Extra Crispy."

Committed now, he took off on a sfumato version of "Green Dolphin Street," grafting a subtle English on the notes—a kind of backspin, a swooping toward, a hesitation before arrival, an approach of moccasins over the moss, then a gutsy instrument-landing in a haze of sax harmony and brushwork on the snare. Even with unassuming hops from one melody phoneme to another, he tossed in lots of little ancillary blips and ornaments, rice at a wedding, celebrating the central interval. He was loosening up.

After several more hours of continuous playing, his sound took on a more complex coloring. In "Blue Monk,"

he arrived at a world-weary but kind inflection he really liked—the tone of a landlady telling yet another college student not to hammer railroad spikes into the walls. "My heart cries out for a richer texture!" he cried, taking a breath, and in a few simple excursions of melody ("Gone With the Wind"), he was able to play the expression of a child he had seen from the bus, seven or so, holding a stiffly splayed stuffed animal by one yellow ear. The bus drove through a puddle, sending a serif of iridescent water toward the sidewalk. The girl saw the wave just in time, and flipped the stuffed animal protectively to her chest as the water hit her, puffing her cheeks, smiling.

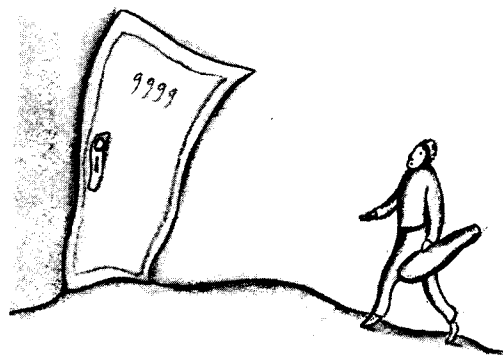
"Human sentiment!" Zeno said when he had finished playing the two surprised curves of her eyebrows, and sure enough, when he looked up he saw unfamiliar faces pressed to the small window in the practice-room door, listening. This was encouraging.

He welded an umbrella to his trombone and stood on a street corner playing a set of variations on the small griefs he read in the walks of the passersby—repossessed houseboats, mean grandchildren, hummocky lawns, unmet sales goals—that made one or two of them shed fragile dollar bills into his velvet-lined case and walk briskly off looking embarrassed.

On the eve of the audition he sat at the window of practice room 713 with his trombone directed out the open window. Occasionally a large raindrop slanted into the room, or smacked against the trombone bell with an electronic sound. Lightning flashed. In the light of a streetlamp he saw three youths go up to a student walking alone back to the dorms with her cello. They surrounded her. A knife may have glinted. Zeno quickly inhaled and blew a reasonably good facsimile of an approaching police siren. The youths froze, looked around, sprinted off into the darkness. The woman hurried on toward the main street and got a cab.

"The Moral Trombone," said Zeno.

Feeling reckless, he practiced far into the night, until his lip, a torn and flapping sail, could play no more.



THE AUDITIONS WERE HELD IN THE NEW COMPLEX for the Arts, done in cast concrete. Arriving early the next morning, Zeno signed in at the security desk and passed the ultrasonic concealed-objects scan with no problem. A sign said "Audition in basement level 3," so

Zeno took the elevator down. The word ART had been silk-screened diagonally across the back wall of the elevator in large orange letters. The brushed-steel doors opened silently onto a hall of white Congoleum that ran in both directions as far as the eye could see. Orange ducts and pipes coiled along the ceiling. Zeno began walking down the hall, opening doors. Most of the rooms were unpeopled, although equipped with state-of-the-art videotape equipment, darkrooms of high technical sophistication, electronic-music consoles, and ultramodern low-torque potter's wheels. Where were the artists?

Eventually Zeno came upon a wiry maintenance man who was struggling with a new orange floor buffer that had recently won an industrial-design prize, trying to make it sweep back and forth in smooth crescents across the Congoleum. The buffer had been thoughtfully designed with laser sensors to "see" and compensate for objects in its buff-path, such as small gifted children, forgotten ballet slippers, or sheets of manuscript fallen from a briefcase; but it was continually sensing objects that did not in fact exist, and thus jolting off in undesired directions, pulling the maintenance man, in tears of rage, behind. Zeno hesitated, then tapped the man on the shoulder.

"Excuse me," he shouted over the hiss of the air circulators and the hum of the buffer, "do you know where they're holding the trombone auditions?"

The maintenance man, startled, switched off the machine and said, "Why did you say?" in an accent.

"The trombone auditions," said Zeno.

The maintenance man looked into the middle distance for a long time, pulled a rag from his back pocket, wiped both palms, the back of his neck, and the orange contoured handles of the floor buffer, and stated, smiling ruefully, that he did not understand English.

"*Trombones*," said Zeno. He got out the trombone and played a catchy tune to convey the idea.

The maintenance man brightened, snapping his fingers, and gestured for Zeno to follow him. They took off behind the buffer, avoiding several nonexistent works of sculpture. In front of door 9999 the maintenance man stopped and said, "This." Then he lurched off down the hall, keys ringing.

Zeno opened door 9999 and blinked. The room was packed with milling trombonists of all sizes and shapes. Miles of golden tubing swayed and shifted, a wheat field. There was a clamorous mush of sound. Directly in front of him, a group of people, trombones at ease, were excitedly inspecting a homemade mute created from a Cool Whip container, electrician's tape, and several pink-foam hair curlers. Someone at Zeno's right was playing a Shostakovich excerpt with lots of off-beats, making little agonized noises in his throat during the rests like a weight lifter. In one corner a man with inflamed lips was meditating cross-legged on a towel, while right next to him someone else was playing a barbaric yawp from Bruckner's Fourth as loud as she could.

Zeno winced at the spectacle, and inside felt the encroachment of Performance Anxiety. He tried deep breathing, but the air had already been circulated through every trombone in the room at least twice.

On his way toward the sign-up desk he passed a kid with a crew cut who stood immobile, cool, and then suddenly raised his trombone and fired off a perfect *Till Eulenspiegel* excerpt.

That guy's got an arm! thought Zeno, beginning to sweat. He gave his name at the desk and was told he would be heard in about half an hour. Just then a man with one shirttail untucked walked through the door that led to the audition chamber, looking dazed. "A simple slur," the man said, his voice almost breaking. "I'm dead. A simple, stupid slur." He walked off toward the drinking fountain. The person at the desk shrugged and called out, "Stephen Ho, please, Stephen Ho. Marjorie Kossel on standby," over a microphone.

Zeno was tapped on the shoulder. "Hey! You studied at USC under Van Haney, right?"

"No," said Zeno. "I'm self-made, trombonally."

"So sorry," said the stranger, and walked off.

Then someone else said, "You mean you haven't heard of lip surgery? There was a whole big article on it in *Brass Bulletin*. I'll tell you just what they did for me. They took some muscle tissue from my calf? And they kind of wove it all in with my what you call *buccinator* muscles, that's these here in my cheek, and what you call the *risorius* muscles, that's these puppies here, and anyway now I got more accuracy and endurance and high chops than I can safely use. I'm telling you, it's something to keep in mind if you're looking to make it really big, but you got to know it hurts like a bitch the first few months. Watch." He flexed his lip for the crowd. Tiny, unexpected muscles clenched in strange areas under his nose, vibrated at the corners of his mouth. Zeno retreated, worriedly palpating his own mouth (would it suffice?), and sat down on his trombone case to wait his turn.

He closed his eyes. What on earth compelled so many normal, healthy people to play trombone? Why weren't they out doing something purposeful, instrumental, like reducing whole rock faces to rubble? Some of their talents clearly lay in that direction. Remembering the seminar on Performance Anxiety, Zeno pulled a box of earplugs from his pocket and crammed two of them in place. Immediately the discordant splash of excerpts, the scales played at the threshold of pain, dwindled to a distant and muffled commotion, as if they were a school of dolphins seen through binoculars. Better.

He knelt and opened his case, taking out only the mouthpiece. This he spun quickly between his palms, the way the ancients twirled a stick to make fire. When it was sufficiently warm he buzzed a little into it, exercising away the ache in his lip from last night's practice. Then he took out his trombone, put the mouthpiece in, tapped it once lightly, and was ready.



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SOME MINUTES LATER HIS NAME WAS CALLED AND he walked through the inner door. The audition chamber was cold and dark except for a music stand lit by a clip-on opera-pit light. Zeno walked over to it. Wagnerian mists curled about his ankles.

"Welcome to the trombone auditions for the Mammoth Symphony Orchestra," said a resonant voice. A spotlight was turned on, revealing a dais on which sat four Beings in silver robes, with stockings over their heads.

"In accordance with full-disclosure laws, the judges will introduce themselves and state their typical biases," said the judge farthest to the left. "I am Plumbât, and I scorn vibrato."

"I am Plumbob," said the next judge, "and I am most likely to be impressed by a sincere low register and a wry smile after a mistake."

"I am Umplumbon," said the next, "and I've never liked people who bob around when they play."

"And I," said the Being farthest to the right, in a heavy accent, "am J. Bliss, our conductor here of the Mammoth Symphony. I enjoy what is beautiful."

Zeno nodded. This was really the big time.

"You, Zeno," Plumbât continued, "will be judged for tone, accuracy, poise, phrasing, and overall class on a scale from one to ten. Our responses to these parameters will be computer-meshed with an objective weighting program involving the Kelly Skin Pigment Coefficient, the Routledge Sex Hormone Gradient, and your brain/body mass ratio, all of which will determine your ultimate suitability for the Orchestra."

"This is every part false," said Bliss, dismissing the three others with a wave of his hand. "I choose."

"You are fully warmed up, correct?" said Plumbob.

"I hope," said Zeno.

"Then play for us now the *Götterdämmerung* excerpt, please," said Bliss.

Umplumbon raised a finger. "But play it with the plunger mute."

Frowning, Zeno deployed the mute and began playing. Plumbât tapped his hand on his knee. Plumbob oscillated her pencil. Umplumbon made a bored sigh and scratched his ear through the stocking.

When Zeno had finished the passage, each judge took a black Magic Marker and wrote an overall evaluation on a white card. They held the cards up for Zeno to see.

"Each tone's almost hallucinatory presence distracted us from melody and the grander tug of form. Too atomistic," said Plumbât. The card said 9.8.

"Mythic in scope and range," said Plumbob. "Sumptuous, toothsome sound." The card said 9.9.

"Rollicking, bawdy, lusty," said Umplumbon. The card said 9.99.

Bliss's card was blank. He leaned forward in his chair. "Mr. Zeno, play more for us."

"Thank you, Maestro," said Zeno. Everything hinged on this. He swallowed and said, "I shall now improvise extem-

poraneously on a Bach partita for solo violin. For this I must ask for total darkness in the audition chamber." As he played, he wandered the unlit room, avoiding pillars, walls, and stairwells by echo-location. The judges sat spellbound. In Zeno's twelfth and final improvisation, a hyperchromatic tour de force, he snuck into the melody a re-statement of the ontological argument, and, in counterpoint, a playful defense of the essentially nondiscursive character of aesthetic judgments.

There was a momentary silence, followed by the resolute squeak of Bliss's Magic Marker. His card said 9.999.

"This is unusual," said Plumbât. "The judges shall confer." They held up the cards again and whispered to each other behind them.

Finally Bliss said, "Exceptionally, the judges will reach a primary decision. We are very highly pleased to say to you our willingness to engage you, your services, in full position of the principal trombone." He struggled for a time with the stocking, succeeded in removing it from his head, and then, smiling, hair awry, shook Zeno's hand.

Zeno bowed and said, "I am most pleased." Bingo! Yah-hah! Yahoo!

When the five of them filed out of the audition chamber together, all the other trombonists stopped playing and looked at them. "A decision has been reached," said Umplumbon. Many applauded; some wept. One raised a sign that said "Smash Culturally Biased Auditions."



NOW THAT HE WAS PRINCIPAL IN THE MAMMOTH Symphony Orchestra, Zeno felt that he had truly arrived. His reputation grew, and soon he was getting requests to teach lucrative master classes in mountain retreats. Conn, the band-instrument company, invited him to endorse a trombone of his own design. He got an apartment and a charge card and settled down to orchestral life. Often, as he looked at the backs of his fellow musicians (lovable, most of them, and capable enough on their instruments) and at Bliss on the podium, frail but smiley, playfully wiping his glasses on the blouse of the assistant concertmistress, he had to suppress a yelp of innocent triumph. I am here! The world is a good place!

He meditated upon his success in his apartment, lights out, blinds drawn, two off-kilter pairs of sunglasses straddling his head, pretending in this way to be floating or hanging in the midst of a vast black vacuum, suspended

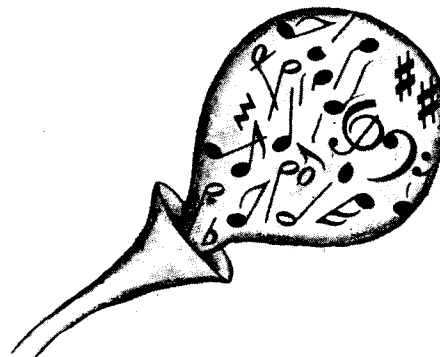
only by the vibrating filament of pitch he was playing; he felt he could happily sustain the tone for hours, slowly rotating, his bell eclipsing planets and distant suns, if only the downstairs neighbor would not begin javelining her ceiling with golf clubs to get him to quiet down. After reading some theoretical physics and doing quantities of sit-ups to strengthen the abdominal region, he endeavored to duplicate the initial incarnating grunt of the Big Bang, which by his calculations was a pedal B-flat.

But when, one evening, he accidentally banged the trombone into his refrigerator handle as he tried to demonstrate the Doppler effect to his dinner guest by sprinting past her playing a C-natural, the resultant dent in the bell—which gave his reflection in the metal, normally a fluid declension, a disturbing angularity, breaking his frown into two discrete planes—seemed to be a flaw in the continuity of his satisfaction as well. Was playing the Standard Repertoire in the Mammoth Symphony the most that could be achieved on the trombone—the instrument Berlioz had called “*épique*”? A new test, a higher harmonic, seemed necessary. Upon experiment, he found the new dent to be actually audible, at least to his ear, especially on the middle E-flat (which had been, prior to the Frigidaire accident, one of his finest accomplishments), blurring the outlines of the note with its incremental drag. Imperfection! This led Zeno to read widely in aerodynamics for several days, with the aim of attempting a mathematical description of the optimal theoretical path a single air molecule would take through his instrument. Adapting the Wright Brothers’ simple procedure, he played over a smoking candle and studied the whorled shadow of the ensuing air turbulence on the wall. He decided that he ideally ought to strive for a note with no turbulence at all, a note that magically tiptoed into the air, squall-free, pure. He could not quite arrive at it; he was treated for smoke inhalation at Mammoth General and released.

Late one night Zeno awoke suddenly, his heart thrashing. It had occurred to him that he had not yet made a single mistake during his seven months with the Orchestra. He had not missed an entrance, had an intonation problem, split a note. *How long could this last?* The future crawled with possible errors. What if, as with earthquakes, the fact that he had made no minor mistakes meant that the error he finally, inevitably *did* commit would be colossal? Think how quickly, how casually, the other musicians would revise their opinion of him after he had blown it, just once, on an epic scale: they would say, “Sure, Zeno’s a fine player, competent, a little uneven maybe, embarrassed himself a couple of months ago on the Bartók, but he has his good days.” Good days! Zeno, prone on the bed, winced into the pillow.

Rousing himself, he groped for the warm cube of the electric clock: it was one minute to four. Outside, there was a restless breeze. The street, a busy one during the day, was quiet. “Now, Zeno, be calm,” he said to himself. “If a motor vehicle drives by within the next minute or so, it

will mean that you will make a significant and painful mistake on your trombone; if not, you have nothing to worry about.” Almost immediately, before he could say, “Ha ha, not really! Cancel the pact! I was asleep!” a delivery truck of some kind rattled by, banging numerous metallic flaps. “If I cannot now get to sleep because I am anxiously wondering whether this motor-vehicle omen is to be trusted,” said Zeno, supporting himself on the mattress with his knees and forehead in the classic pose of the insomniac, “the omen will be *really and truly true*.” And sure enough, dawn found him sleepless, reading Inventions Wanted ads in back issues of *Popular Mechanics*, certain of imminent failure.



AT THE MORNING REHEARSAL ZENO TOOK HIS SEAT in the brass section, looking around to see if anyone noticed his nervousness. There was a beautiful trombone solo in the first movement of the piano concerto they were to perform that evening. Bliss, an elderly man in a tentlike patterned shirt of daring ethnicity, stepped onto the podium. The concertmaster hit an A on the piano and Zeno pretended to tune with the rest of the Orchestra. Would this be it? Would he err during this very rehearsal? He felt as if each note he had played thus far with the Mammoth Symphony were an air molecule vibrating in an over-inflated balloon—the question being how many more humid breaths could this balloon, now warm to the touch, receive before it suddenly flashed into nothing, leaving only a humble scrap of dark-red rubber draped on a startled bystander’s shoe?

“Hey, Zeen!” Zeno was roused by a tap on his shoulder. It was the second trombonist, a bear of a man named Mort. Mort, Zeno had noticed, often dozed off while counting rests in a slow movement, reawakening himself just before he had an entrance by instinctively snaking his tongue up his nose and prodding his brain back into consciousness. When he had a lot of hard playing to do, by contrast, he often rehearsed shirtless, bulbing his gut out when he hit a loud note, until, with a cartilaginous twonk, like the abrupt knotting of a rubber band as one winds up a propeller glider, his navel would suddenly pop out from its grotto, the nodosity graced with a blue tuft of lint. “Zeen,” said Mort. “You heard the story on the piano soloist?”

“No,” said Zeno.

“Oh, boy. He’s el weirdo himself. I read in the paper he

was so wild as a kid that his father had to shackle him to a piano leg, and that's why he first learned to play. The guy lost the use of his thumb in a freak parachute mishap about four years ago, but he's making a big splash now with nine fingers, they say. Could be just a media gimmick, though. His name's Klipsch."

"Hold on," said Zeno. "Nine fingers?" He looked over at the bony figure orbiting the piano. With a start he recognized him as the Consultant for Performance Anxiety. Klipsch's dead thumb had been secured to his hand with white surgical tape. He shook hands with Bliss, rotated his shoulders several times to loosen up, and sat down on the piano bench. This does not bode well, thought Zeno. Bliss slowly raised his arms.

"Friends," he said. "I introduce Klipsch. Good. If we may now rehearse this concerto for the evening. First movement. Concerning beauty, also tragic. Our hearts must beat."

Zeno's began to. Klipsch removed his earplugs and Bliss gave the downbeat. Zeno counted his rests and stared at the helpful word "Solo," in italics, which was printed above

his approaching solo. From time to time, when Klipsch bounced from the bench to leverage a powerful chord, his distant profile would suddenly appear over Zeno's music stand, crosshatched into a number of shifting triangles by the intervening bows of the violas and second violins. The musicians, perhaps inspired by Klipsch's masterfully transparent touch (how *was* he doing those parallel octaves without his harnessed thumb?), were playing with unusual precision—like a school of tiny fish, they changed chords with instantaneous unanimity. Zeno, however, felt only fitfully inspired. Wait a minute, Bliss! he thought. I'm not sure that I can play this particular solo just now. I need to take a small walk first, collect my thoughts, get some perspective. He had the desperate idea of asking Mort to play the solo, but when he glanced over, trying to look casual, he saw that Mort had fallen asleep, his tongue alarm set for measure 346. That was out. An ignoble thought anyway. His solo galloped closer.

Bliss's usual rehearsal style involved conducting rapturously through large swatches of music and then suddenly alighting on a random phrase, going over it repeatedly un-



BANYAN TREE BEFORE THE CIVIC CENTER, HONOLULU

Hairy
like a man wearing a dress.
You don't speak with me the way the others
do, who tell me,
by green effort, by every half-drowning
and abdomen-push of new leaf,
they want to be trees,
trees tall enough to see over the trees.

You'll stay here and spread out, you say,
in a rumble of a voice
muffled by hair.
You are growing all up out of yourself!

Your roots are branches
so your leaves are the lawn!

If that's the way you are going to be—
deluxe, warm, a sexual fence
with the shapeliness of the many—

then you may have to be an entire nation
yourself,
just yourself in the center and also at the edges.

Who will want anything to do with you?
You get all over us.
You are an old man at heart.

I want to pity you,
freak among nations made up of individuals,
for you are an individual
composed of multitudes.

When a man wears a dress
or has so many legs,
it will always be noticed,
unless he is trying to pass for a tree.

—Marvin Bell

til it finally began to dissatisfy him, thus justifying the initial pause. While he tried to correct one small flaw a host of others began to surface, the phrase in this way growing more and more intolerable—until, beaten, maddened, Bliss moved on. But his progress through Klipsch's concerto had so far hit no snags, and Zeno began blowing warm air through his trombone so he wouldn't be flat. Mort had to participate in the loud brass chord out of which emerged Zeno's solo, so he woke himself up. "Zeen, go for it," he whispered.

It was over in no time. Zeno got eye contact with Bliss and dashed off the solo beautifully, no trouble at all. He was surprised at himself. Hey! Not terribly shabby. Only then did Bliss hold his palm up, signaling the Orchestra to stop. The conductor slowly disengaged his wire glasses from his ears, and mopped his eyes and the top of his head with two genuflective swipes of his handkerchief.

"My second violence," he said, flipping back the pages of his score, "more bow at F. Much. Ah, and also: does our fine trombone play out tiny inch more at his cantabile? Pah! Pah! Pom! You see? Again."

Zeno nodded and they sailed through the same section. But Bliss was not satisfied. "If this trombone is considering melody as structure for shape? Each note not for cube, self-entity, but whole *sound*, as a plant, one note by one every leaf, reaching toward sun, which is globe? Also I ask no diminuendo on our F-sharp."

Zeno nodded emphatically this time, as if all were clarified, and they backtracked again. Bliss halted in the middle of the solo, waving his arms irritably.

"No. Yes louder if the trombone attempted. Certainly! Thousand, million more possible passion. Soul, soul not of enduring, pessimistical; forward on love softly, but force! Force of soul not loud as the garbagemen, which bang the morning, but superpower of spiritual. Try try try."

Sweating and trembling, Zeno sincerely tried to follow instructions. Again they stopped in mid-phrase.

"Ah, ah, but not still! Try try." Bliss motioned for the rest of the Orchestra to put their instruments down. "Alone now, trombone, wild heartbeat, gallop with waves, rain, misty! In sadness but optimistical. Yes heart puncture in loss, all dying, but no. Single ember!"

The conductor gave the cue and Zeno began his solo alone. Bliss conducted him with clenched fists, gazing tragically skyward, until one note apparently outraged him.

"O crucify!" Bliss cried. "Note toward small piece of dog excrete?! Scrap fluff?!"

"Don't let him get to you, Zeen," Mort whispered.

"I'm not exactly clear on what you'd like me to correct, Maestro," said Zeno to Bliss, a confrontational edge in his voice. Perhaps a dramatic gesture such as walking out would be appropriate. Klipsch, at the piano, spoke up in the nick of time.

"Onward," he said to no one in particular, in a loud sing-song. "Onward we go-ho."

"Yes, onward, onward!" said Bliss, getting very excited, flaring a single nostril. "Thousand in Europe swarm, mixup, helpless grief. Again at F, friends, again together, weeping, weeping to Europe!"

Bliss made a sideward plunge with the baton, activating an ominous tremolo in the second violins and violas, then swept it in a slow semicircle, as if it were a knife catching a last drift of mayonnaise under the rim of a jar. This brought the cellos in, hunched, chins thrust forward. For all his lapses, Bliss was an inspired conductor. Zeno slid toward the edge of his seat, raised his trombone, awaited the cue. His mouth was dry.

Several beats passed, signaled by barely perceptible oscillations at the tip of the baton, whereupon Bliss suddenly lifted the whole crescendoing Orchestra up in his cupped hands, high in the air, so that the shoulders of his tentlike shirt grazed his flushed cheeks, and brought the players down on the loud brass chord that began Zeno's solo. Filled with an intensity of concentration he had never felt before, Zeno gave it everything he had, watching Bliss's hands and nothing else. Bliss evoked the shapes of the notes in gestures impossible to classify, smoothing them, helping them along as one bustles children up the steps of a school bus, often moving his arms as if the air were a slightly resistant near-liquid, although at times also interjecting a sharply edged beat or two. He brought in the woodwinds with a diagonal karate slice of his left hand, and as Zeno's solo neared its impossibly high terminal note, conducted a slight accelerando with the paddle-wheel movements of a host at a party who holds in his arms five or six winter coats, and accepts several more from entering guests, hugging the huge bundle and receiving coats with alternate arms. His baton then made a last downward bounce off an imaginary surface.

Zeno reached for the note; willed it forth. In a bulb-flash of sound it lit the hall for an instant of blue perfection.

Letting the winter coats fall neglected at his feet, Bliss spread both arms wide, palms down, delineating an evening horizon, and brought the Orchestra down to a pianissimo. He signaled to Klipsch to make his entrance on the piano. They went on to finish the movement.

"Ah, trombone, trombone," said Bliss after the last cadence, wiping his eyes. "I am motionless. I love you. This was music. Deeply music." He turned to the pianist. "Klipsch? Anything?"

"It will never be played better than we just played it," said Klipsch.

ZENO DIDN'T PLAY A NOTE ALL AFTERNOON, FEARFUL of disrupting his solo streak. He vacuumed out his trombone case. Perhaps seven perfect public airings of the solo in one twenty-four-hour period was too much to ask of an organism. He felt that how he performed that evening would prove a cosmological point one way or another, which was not good, since it only made him more

nervous and hence more likely to prove the point that he didn't want to prove at all. There was a strange determinism in all of this. He resolved to get to the bottom of it and called the library, Telephone Reference.

"I know you get nutty questions," he said. "But I have a very important trombone solo to play tonight, and I am afraid. Can you give me an historical perspective?"

"Let's hear a representative sample of your playing," said the reference librarian.

Zeno stretched the telephone receiver to the bathroom, where the acoustics were better, and looped it around the shower fixture.

"Here goes," he said, and played some of "Sweet Georgia Brown." "That enough?"

"That will be fine," said the reference librarian. For several minutes he heard her flipping efficiently through various medieval and modern texts. Amazing, their instinct for these things. Finally she said, "First on the positive side. We find a trombone-playing angel in a work by Filipino Lippi that appears in figure 429 of Lacroix's *The Arts in the Middle Ages*. Let's see. The great trombone-maker Johann Ehe in 1732 cast winged angels into the bell of one of his instruments, as we see in figure 750 of Baines's excellent *European and American Musical Instruments*." More cracking of book spines. "Ho! Here's one. There is apparently a fairy tale called 'Saint Peter and His Trombone,' according to Ireland's *Index to Fairy Tales*, although she gives no reference. Hmm. Heinrich Schütz, 1585–1672, composed a very early trombone solo accompanying the words in *In te, Domine, speravi* in one of his *Symphoniae sacrae*, and of course much later Mozart, in the 'Tuba Mirum' from his *Requiem*, used the trombone to announce the Second Coming. Thus does God through scholarship reveal his intentions to us."

"Excuse me?" said Zeno.

"But now," continued the reference librarian, "the forces of evil. What happens when one extends the trombone slide out one position?"

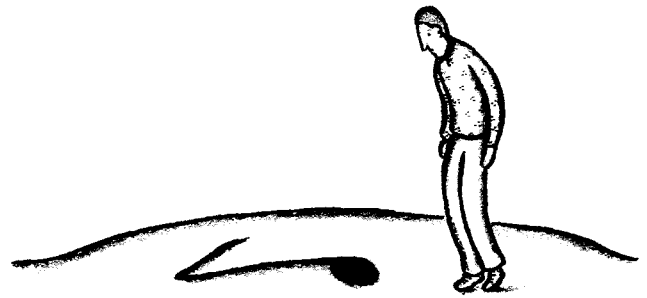
"The pitch goes down a half-step."

"Correct. That is precisely the figure I have here. Now, as there are seven primary positions—true?—one for each Deadly Sin, the pitch differential between the first and seventh position will be six half steps, or *one tritone*. B-flat to E. But the tritone, an evil-sounding interval, according to my sources, was banned from Gregorian chant because it was, as the *religiosi* called it, the *diabolus in musica*. This from the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*. The Devil, then, has been built right into your trombone slide."

"Ouch," said Zeno.

"Exactly. And who can really say whether the Snake in the slide will overpower the Angels in the bell in the fateful nanosecond prior to articulation?"

Zeno shot a curious, almost fearful glance at his trombone. He remembered to be courteous, and thanked the reference librarian several times, although he now felt for certain he was doomed.



KLIPSCH WAS IMPOSING IN TAILS, HAVING REDONE HIS thumb with black electrician's tape to match. He extended his bound hand to Zeno before the concert.

"Relax and concentrate," he said. "I've never been able to do it."

Mort was cleaning his rotor valve with a toothbrush. "Shake your bootie," he said to Zeno. "Go wild."

Zeno was knee-deep in his solo before he knew it. He had elbowed his way past the first phrase, was striding into the second. Note succeeded note like a prosperous reign of kings. Bliss winked at him, obviously pleased. Crescendoing on the penultimate C-sharp, Zeno winked back, but the movement caused a drop of perspiration to fall suddenly from his brow and snag on an eyelash, magnifying for a starry instant the crucial remaining note. The simplicity of the mission: simply slur up to the final E. It shimmered just ahead of him, a high, alpine pool.

He closed his eyes, brought his knees together, jumped. Time slowed to strobic cross-sections of thought. Blurred. Piercing the amnion. Red alert. This may be serious. Over-shoot. Alarms, buzzers. I can't hold her, chief. Yow. Disgrace! Unsuspected veins antlering up his neck, across his temples. Hup! Dumplings. Tussle with the note, attempt a pin, shoulder leverage. Slam it. Chromosome damage. A micron too high. Get in there, sucker. Whomp. Dogs, larvae. Heaps of rotting magazines. Let me think. Hit the beaches! Note flipping salmonlike up to the higher harmonic. Yodeling for a millennium of agony. Faltering. Disfigurements. Sneers, ignominy, trash.

When he had finally centered the note, Zeno did his best to make it worthy of him, holding it for the four-beat decrescendo until Bliss cut him off and cued Klipsch. Then slowly, as if uncovering a wound, he disengaged his mouthpiece from his lips, head bowed. His mouth, white from the pressure, took some time uncrumpling.

The concerto fell apart in hundreds of small ways after that. Klipsch made no sign that he was rattled by Zeno's split note, but during a lightning run up the keyboard one of his fingers came down squarely between two keys, where his cigarette would have rested. Bliss betrayed his shock in a flicker of uncertainty at the crest of an upbeat, communicated to one of the second violins who was having marital problems: he plucked a D instead of a D-flat. An oboe was distracted and came in a measure early. Thus, in

a chain reaction, errors multiplied, confidence waned, and the sheen went off the performance.

As the concerto disintegrated, Bliss's face underwent terrible transformations. From a look of rapture and serenity it ratcheted down to sudden disappointment, controlled irritation, then grief, horror, and despair. He flailed the music to a close, utterly dejected, bowed once with a smile that looked as if it had been created by a dental instrument, and followed Klipsch offstage. The audience stood, clapping lustily. When the two of them returned on-stage, Bliss, a look of near-revenge in his eye, motioned for Zeno to take a bow. Zeno did so, muttering, "I'm so sorry, Bliss, Klipsch, World-at-large, Mom, Dad, I'm so sorry." He noticed he was trembling.

"How bad was it?" he asked Mort. "You can tell the truth, I won't choke."

Mort looked embarrassed. "Not . . . not . . . It was just unexpected, from you, that's all."

The audience filed out, leaving behind tidal remnants: umbrellas, curled programs, scarves. Klipsch came over.

"It was bad," said Zeno.

"Terrible," said Klipsch. "You're like me: you're machined to too close a tolerance. But don't even think about it. The note you splintered has long since been dissipated in hairdos and balcony seat-cushions." He gestured at the hall. "A mistake like that builds character."

Zeno could not treat it so lightly. He was haunted by Bliss's look of total disappointment. In each succeeding rehearsal he felt less in control. His confidence gone, he made careless errors and his intonation grew shaky. Every phrase he played seemed to flap listlessly from his trombone like one more evil from Pandora's box, populating the world with gleeful flaws. Bliss shouted at first ("Trombone! What can you do!"), then simply shook his head. The second violinists began gossiping about his "slump." Mort kept a diplomatic distance for a time, knowing it was bad form to bring up mistakes, but as Zeno's playing nosedived he finally had to say something during a rehearsal break.

"Zeen, what's going on? You're not yourself. You're blowing this way out of proportion. Are you eating properly?"

Zeno shook his head. "The best is the enemy of the good."

"Amen to that," said Mort. "You're a star performer in this orchestra, Zeen, but you've thought yourself into a slump."

Zeno felt perilously close to tears. "Mort?" he said.

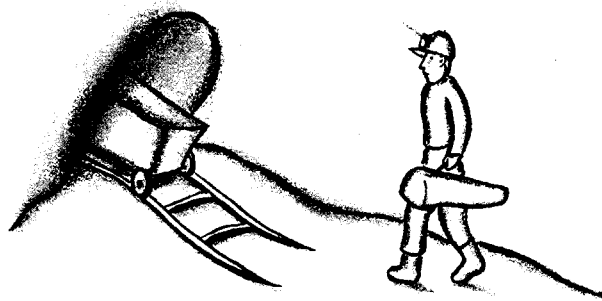
"Yo, buddy. I'm right here."

"Can you handle the job as principal?"

"Now, there's an idea. Take a rest for a few days. We've only got the kiddie concert tomorrow and then the shopping-mall thing on Thursday. No prob."

"I think I'm resigning," Zeno said. "Tell Bliss I've gone home to work in the mine and that I'm as sorry as you can get." With that, he left the stage. From the wings he watched Mort reflect for a moment, and then use his foot

to nudge the following items one chair to the right: a wadded chamois towel, a Windex bottle full of slide solution, and the damp piece of newspaper he used to catch spit-valve condensation. Finally Mort stood up, sidestepped, and sat down as principal trombone.



ZENO DROVE HIS FATHER'S PICKUP TO THE EDGE OF the strip mine. He had not played trombone for fifty-six hours, and his mouth muscles were losing combat-readiness. Huge orange payloaders groaned beneath him, their tires leaving herringbone spoor in the earth. The foreman, MBA Stanford, with a keen eye for ways to institutionalize novelty, had hired five out-of-work Conservatory graduates to play trombone in the pit, certain that Zeno's earlier achievements could benefit from the economies of scale. Zeno looked on as the five figures grouped themselves in front of a vertical slab of limestone, adjusting their hard hats. The foreman signaled with his handkerchief; they began playing Elizabethan fanfares as loudly as they could. Listen to that mail-order phrasing! Zeno said to himself. Listen to that paint-by-number dynamic range! Yet tons of stone slid obediently to the floor of the gorge.

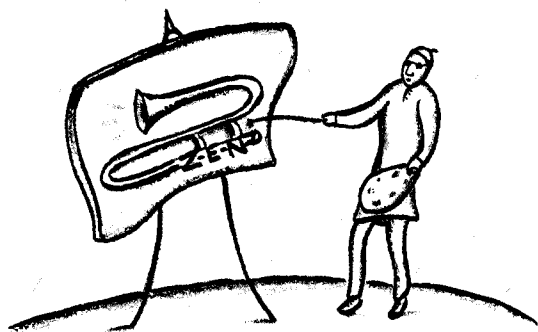
"Watch this, heathens!" he cried. He raised his trombone and played "Have a Coke and a Smile." Nothing happened. He did "If You've Got the Time, We've Got the Beer," full volume. The rock did not budge. Meanwhile the five Conservatory graduates had swung their trombones toward the southwest face, where the foreman was gesturing; they were starting in with Gabrieli. Wonders cease to be wonders, thought Zeno. He lifted his gaze from the mine and looked out over the hills that decrescended toward the horizon, their contours softened, as moss softens antlers, by wild flowers, sumac, oak trees, alfalfa. Just visible, floating over the farthestmost rise, the famous Mammoth "Artpole" staked its claim on the horizon, jutting up from the Complex for the Arts, topped by a microwave transmitter and a revolving restaurant.

This was a moment for definitive action. Zeno held his trombone at arm's length and solemnly addressed it. "Trombone, you are the engine of my misfortune. You failed to cooperate during the last, abyssful instant before I split the high E, thwarting my purest intention. Now you bring me low in front of a bunch of Conservatory students. You are unprofessional. Chump!"

He whirled around like a discus thrower and flipped the trombone as hard as he could out over the strip mine and its surrounding hills, toward the Artpole—gone, he thought triumphantly, forever! But as he bent to close his empty case he heard a helicoptering sound: the brass bone had boomeranged, and was describing, because of its off-center center of gravity, a catenary of jerky ellipses, like those one makes when trying to reliquify the ball point of a pen, slapping finally back into his palm.

"I will be rid of you," Zeno said. He drove without stopping to the Atlantic coast, where he rented a wet suit, mask, and weight belt, and swam out to a reef, finding a place he could sit with reasonable comfort, breathing through the trombone. Experimentally, he took in a mouthful of seawater and forced it into the instrument and out the bell, which just cleared the waves. A Russian trawler whaling in illegal waters ran aground on the reef. But Zeno said, "Not good enough, trombone." He removed his weight belt, looped it around the slide, and let go of the instrument. It sank quickly, grazed his leg, deflected off his ankle; it thonked an escutcheon of brain coral, making a brittle sound, like salad grit chewed. Then it disappeared from sight, the bell a shrinking halo among the fishes.

Zeno crawled from the sea, shivering and tromboneless.



HE AWOKE ON THE BEACH. IN THE PREDAWN LIGHT he focused on a pair of graceful feet. Delicate veins ran down the sides of their arches in erosion patterns. He wiped the hair from his eyes and looked up.

"Good morning, Zeno," said Thama Shelf, the daughter of the music-store owner. She had done her hair a new way, and wore a blue business suit, but was still very nice looking.

"Thama!" said Zeno, dazed. "Your father's Paradox did me in. I need a new career."

Thama smiled. "I am Conn's regional rep now. You don't need a new career, my shipwrecked one, you need a new trombone. You need a trombone that perfectly compensates for your flaws and highlights your substantial abilities. Conn has tried over and over to get you to design and endorse an instrument, but you've just ignored our letters. It's time to take a trip to the Conn Trombone Center in Naples."

"No way," said Zeno. "It's cooking school for me. My lip has died."

On the plane across the Atlantic, newly shaved and wearing a tie, Zeno asked why Conn had built the Trombone Center in Naples.

"Actually we are located outside of Naples, in Pompeii," said Thama. "Perhaps you've read the 1954 *Grove's Dictionary*? I have the passage here somewhere. Yes:

Of the stories concerning the history of the trombone, none has received wider credence than that of the finding of two Roman Sackbuts under the ashes of Herculaneum in 1783. "The King of Naples made one a present to the British monarch, and from this antique, the instruments now called trombones have been fashioned." . . . Sometimes Herculaneum, other times Pompeii is given as the place of the finding.

"Conn did some spadework and determined that it was definitely Pompeii, so we built the Trombone Center there, with joint funding from Exxon and the NEA."

When they had arrived in the old city, Thama took Zeno's hand and led him to a newly excavated villa on one of the side streets. On the floor, encased in glass, was the stone form of a man curled up as if asleep, with a small stone trombone by his side. They proceeded down a short, cool hallway.

"Here we are," said Thama. "The Trombone Room."

"Boy!" said Zeno. In the middle of the stone floor, only partially visible in the ambient haze, was what looked to be a large and complicated steam engine, cordoned off by velvet ropes. It had brass governors, iron flywheels, tappets of chrome, and pistons that discharged pastel-colored plumes of vapor in sudden expostulations. Into one end rolled a conveyor belt of scrap metal, car doors, I-beams, plumbing fixtures, while out the other end rolled phalanxes of brand-new trombones.

"We've tapped the volcano," said Thama, "so we're geothermal-powered. That got us the funding. All our trombones originate right here. The only real bug was adjusting for the extreme variations in scrap-feed composition. Aluminum can be a headache."

"Oh, Thama," said Zeno, "this is epic."

"Now," said Thama, "linked by a Mylar hose to the Trombone Machine is our Trombone Simulator. That's where you come in." They walked up to a La-Z-Boy rigged with wires and counterweights. "What you have to do is to strap yourself in the Simulator, grip the contoured handles, and act as if you were playing the trombone. While you pretend to play, our computer will 'misread' your EEGs, treating them, with the help of Fourier analysis, as if they were oscilloscope images of actual sounds. The Trombone Machine will then say to itself, 'What kind of trombone would produce that sort of sound?' So the quality of the instrument you design is limited only by your capacity to imagine tonal perfection. In you go."

Zeno lowered himself into the Simulator and Thama attached muscle-tension sensors around his mouth. He kissed her: several Vu-meters jumped.

"All right, Zeno," Thama said. "Try out the machine."

Zeno pursed his lips, thinking about a note. It appeared between two loudspeakers on the far wall, a tuning A. "Turn up the volume a little," he said.

"Think louder," said Thama. "Play the finest conceivable trombone."

"The finest conceivable . . ." said Zeno. To flex his elbow he played a blizzard of sixteenth notes. In response a small mound of paper-clip-sized trombones exited the Machine.

"That's it, honey. Now give me more."

Zeno belted out a tenor aria from Puccini. "Hey, this thing has got room for real pathos!" he cried. A trombone shaped like a bloodhound lay on the conveyor belt.

"More," said Thama. "I need much more."

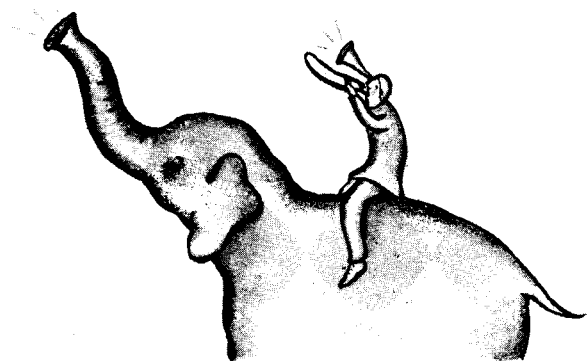
He closed his eyes and began to imagine the solo from Klipsch's concerto. The Trombone Machine increased tempo, accompanying him with a tap dance of clicks and sighs. Orange steam shot from the valves. Inside the Machine, as Zeno played, the perfect trombone took shape: each twist of melody pressed an alloy loop to the requisite radius, hammered out an appropriate flare, burnished an inner surface to its ideal smoothness. When he hit the final E, Zeno allowed for a tiny flaw in the note, an enriching, nearly inaudible dishevelment. He finished. There was silence. "Well?" he said. "Where is it?" All at once the governor whirled and the pistons gave a concluding sigh; out of the Trombone Machine emerged the Conn Model 99Z trombone.

"You did it," said Thama, when things had calmed down. She put on asbestos gloves, took the glowing trombone from the conveyor belt, and plunged it into cold water. When it was cool, she brought it over to Zeno.

"The distinguished thing," said Zeno. A Rolls-Royce figurine swan-dived off the bell. "It looks just fine. I'm exhausted."

Thama helped him out of the Simulator and knelt over him. "You get some rest," she said. "The next step for you is the promotional tour."

"Make it a honeymoon?" said Zeno.



AT THE UNIVERSITY OF INDIANA, KICKING OFF THE tour, the newly styled Consultant for Slide Trombone told a brass convention, "I date my life from my first big public error. It made me realize that absolute control is not possible. Perhaps most of you know this already. I did not. The knowledge left a residue of hurt,

which widened, as the weeks went by, to humility, and finally, I like to think, reached its final form as empathy. I am pleased to say that I was able to design empathy into my Model 99Z."

Next, Conn flew Zeno and Thama to India. In the town of Chandigarh they watched a fakir charm a snake with a microtonal melody on a sacred oboe. Unable to resist, the Trombone Consultant began playing along, executing the veering modal tune in unison, and then, gaining confidence, switched to a minor-third accompaniment. People laughed and began dancing. The fakir stopped playing to listen, and Zeno, aiming his bell straight at the reptilian cortex, took off on a melody that split the octave into fifty-three separate pitches. So melismatic was it that the snake became over-stimulated and commenced twisting itself into alphas and omegas, yins and yangs, mandalas, clef signs, and have-a-nice-day smiles. "Now watch this," said Zeno. He played the mind melody in retrograde inversion, compelling the snake to duck deftly inside out and execute all the patterns backward and in reverse order. When the melody spiraled to a close, the snake lay panting, forked tongue inert in the red dust, in the looped shape of a trombone. "Pretty good," said Thama. The fakir, tremendously excited, traded the snake for a 99Z in order to get those fifty-three separate tones and play real blues. And Zeno continued from village to village, popularizing birth control by making the snake dance in the form of various IUD devices, loops, spirals, twists, as Thama declaimed their virtues. "I hope someone is benefiting from all this," Zeno said to Thama on the airplane to Africa, as he invented a new mute from the yellow oxygen mask.

While in Tanzania they spent a day searching for the trombone's evolutionary analogues. Thama read from her notebook as they hiked the veldt: "As the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* points out in its 'Sackbut' article, 'It is certainly significant that the Ital. *tromba*, from which sprang . . . "trombone," means a pump as well as. . . the trunk of an elephant.'"

They reached a clearing. Zeno heard a branch crack. An old bull elephant appeared from behind a moribund baobab. One eye had been lost in a battle with a delivery truck; the other roved in its socket with a dark distrust for mankind. Zeno stepped into its path, raised his trombone, and played a series of breathtakingly pure tones like the combination to a safe. Immediately all the ticks on the elephant retracted their heads from the tender folds of skin around the old animal's mouth and behind its ears, where they had caused it no end of grief, and dropped fibrillating to the ground. The elephant, deeply touched, raised its trunk in gratitude and produced a deep blast, made more resonant by thirst, accompanied by a glittering cloud of dust; Zeno matched the pitch with his 99Z, imitating its fuzzy timbre. Buzzards congregated to listen in the trees.

The bull elephant stretched its trunk, revealing concentric rings of lighter gray hide and a chapped smile, and the tone slid down a perfect fourth; the trunk then rete-

scoped, glissing back up to the original note and establishing the key. Thama offered the beast some water from her canteen: it was shyly inhaled from her palm. Refreshed, the elephant began a slow, chromatic fugue melody, which Zeno answered in counterpoint a measure later. The remnant of the once populous herd strode over to join in, fanning their ragged ears. The stretto was very fine, with seventy-five hooting trunks and one trombone raised toward the leafy canopy, and Thama conducting.

"Now you are ready to re-audition for Bliss," said Thama.

"Now I'm ready," said Zeno.

HE APPROACHED THE CONDUCTOR IN THE EMPTY concert hall. "I have roamed the world with my wife and my new trombone—which is selling quite well, incidentally—and what I have lost in raw power I have, I hope, gained in subtlety and range," he said.

"I will listen," said Bliss.

Zeno brought out his 99Z and played the theme from *Kojak*, did a beautiful job.

"Very fine," said Bliss. "Always very fine without audience. But I must allow myself to depend. You I cannot depend. Uneven and slump! You are for, I might imagine better, second trombone."

"Mort is a solid player," said Zeno. "I'll be second to him."

Bliss agreed to this arrangement, and thus Zeno played out his life as second trombone in the Mammoth Symphony Orchestra, commuting from his home in Bang County. He performed Stravinsky's *The Fire Bird* sixty-seven times, Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* forty-one times, *Pictures at an Exhibition* and the *1812 Overture* twenty-three times apiece. Klipsch appeared every year as soloist for the Bang County Fourth of July outdoor concert, doing a potboiler concerto. The Orchestra performed, at this event, on a portable stage erected near the seventh hole of a golf course reclaimed from the strip mine, for thousands of families on blankets—Zeno's included. The sound was amplified through huge black speakers. Insects fried themselves on the stage lights and dropped, smoking, into the viola section.

"By the way, Zeno," said Klipsch just before one of these concerts, "tell me again why a player like you ended up as second trombone."

"A handful with quietness?" said Zeno.

"You should have kept pushing," said Klipsch. He addressed the second violinists, who were keeping their hands flexible in the evening air by holding them in their arm-pits: "Keep pushing, people! Keep at it. You've got to keep

whipping yourself on if you want to achieve anything." He turned back to Zeno. "You know that I had my thumb rewired this year? I now control it with head movements." So saying, he lolled his head onto his shoulder; his thumb mimicked the movement, coming to rest on a knuckle.

"Quite an achievement," said Zeno. He threaded his way toward the brass section.

Bliss, older and frailer, walked into the lights. "This night, as every year, we have Klipsch, nine-fingerings, in solo," he said into the microphone. There was applause. "Later we overwhelm for you with explosions, in memory of the States of America!" Cheers and whistles. "However, first we play *Spangle of Stars*."

The audience rose and became quiet. Standing beside the piano, looking very serious, Klipsch bowed his head. His thumb followed suit. A distant infant wailed; the music began. Zeno, watching the rest of his brass section swing and dip their instruments to the melody, had an insight. As they began the piano concerto, he leaned over to Mort and whispered, "Mort, you know what? It occurs to me that life is quite similar to what you might imagine to be the experience of a single note in a trombone: you emerge as a sound of a certain frequency, this is your heredity, and then you wander through a tube of variable length and bore which both alters and amplifies the original vibration—this is nurture, life experience, reading, country, all that—and then you are sneezed out the bell, music, spirit, no less, an invisible sound jostling the air molecules; that's death, you see, and the whole series of small occurrences you have set in motion by living, that play themselves out even though you're not around to hear them. What do you think?"

"Not now, Zeen," Mort hissed out of the side of his mouthpiece, staring straight ahead in anticipation of Bliss's downbeat, intensely nervous, his knee trembling. "I got a solo coming up."

After Klipsch's concerto, they did a few pops pieces and some Borodin, and then closed with the *1812 Overture*. When the fireworks began near the end of the piece, Zeno, tired of the corbball melody, put two earplugs in his ears. In the sudden resultant quiet, he hid behind his music stand, playing to himself the sound of a bee cleaning its antennae, a sponge drying on a countertop. Then he pointed his trombone at the sky, and while the Bang County Civil War Society set off their cannon, he caused a silent firework to explode directly over the Orchestra in the shape of a large blue human ear, which expanded and finally snuffed out with a last multiplication of orange sparks.

He smiled and counted his remaining rests. □



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN AND GEORGE SAND

LIKE ONE OF HIS OWN preludes, Chopin's first encounter with George Sand arrived at its logical conclusion with no promise of there ever being more to come. It took place in Paris in the fall of 1836. Franz Liszt, intimate friend of both, had long wished them to meet, but Chopin had resisted. He abhorred intellectualizing in general, by women in particular. His tastes were as delicate as his constitution. He liked his women young, beautiful, of impeccable ancestry, preferably innocent, at the very least discreet. George Sand was none of the above.

An introduction became inevitable, however, when Sand moved into rooms below those shared by Liszt and his mistress, Countess Marie d'Agoult, at the Hôtel de France, not far from Chopin's apartment at No. 38 Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. Madame Sand had therefore to be included in the small soirée at Chopin's on November 5. Franz, Marie, and George arrived together. Chopin, fragile and charming, with his aquiline nose, long tapering fingers, and aristocratic manner, found himself greeting

a small (less than five feet tall) dark-haired woman clearly older (by six years) than himself who wore—as he had been warned to expect—pants.

It was an exceptionally relaxed evening. Chopin clowning about gently with his guests, trying not to be appalled by Sand, who puffed away at her cigar, philosophized madly, and addressed all alike in the second-person singular. Tea was served. Later both Chopin and Liszt played. The latter exuded his usual virile charm, but in deference to the assembled company Sand did not take her accustomed position, crouched in an ecstatic ball under the piano. She became, instead, especially when Chopin performed, cool and aloof, the detached observer. It was a role played for his benefit, but Chopin did not know that yet. "I have made the acquaintance of a great celebrity: Madame Dudevant, known by the name of George Sand," he wrote home to his family in Poland. "Her appearance is not to my liking and doesn't please me at all."

—Nancy Caldwell Sorel

*The danger of correcting
an author who didn't need correction*

ROBERT FROST CORRUPTED

BY DONALD HALL

THERE IS ONLY ONE FULL COLLECTION OF FROST'S poems in print—*The Poetry of Robert Frost*, edited by Edward Connery Lathem—and the text is corrupt: the editor has altered the rhythm of Frost's poems by repunctuating them. Although several of Frost's critics have complained of these alterations, no one has noted their full extent and nature; most anthologists and many critics now reprint the corrupt text. Lathem has removed commas, added commas, removed hyphens, added hyphens, made words compound, added question marks, and altered dashes. Besides regularizing quotation marks (double quotes for single seems a tolerable change), the editor makes by my count 1,364 emendations, of which his notes justify 247 by reference to earlier printings. Thus he makes 1,117 changes for which he offers no textual sources, an average of 3.4 for each poem.

Frost wrote the line

The woods are lovely, dark and deep

We do not find this line in *The Poetry of Robert Frost*. Instead we find:

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep

To say that the woods are 1) lovely, 2) dark, and 3) deep differs considerably from claiming that they are lovely *in that* they are dark and deep. In Frost's line, the general adjective "lovely" is explained by the more particular modifiers "dark" and "deep." In the editor's line, the egalitarian threesome appears to be parallel, but of course it is not—it is as if we proclaimed that a farmer grew apples, McIntoshes, and Northern Spies.

Before *The Poetry of Robert Frost* was published, our texts were the books that Frost saw into print during his lifetime. Most of the poems were reprinted without change while the poet lived, and at his death, in 1963, were available in *Complete Poems of Robert Frost* and the 1962 collection *In the Clearing*. In 1969, Holt, Rinehart and Winston published Lathem's edition, which is now available in paperback. (Two volumes of selections use Lathem's text; there remains a Pocket Books selection edited by Louis Untermeyer with Frost's punctuation.) In England, Jonathan Cape published Lathem's Frost in 1971, and Ian Ham-

ilton edited a *Selected Poems* for Penguin in 1973, which uses the corrupt text.

It would seem axiomatic that an editor's task is to represent the author's intent insofar as the editor can establish it. When the author is long dead, when manuscripts or printed sources are absent, when a variety of evidence lacks single authority, an editor must rely on historical scholarship to inspire guesses of authenticity and to mediate a readable, probable text. The matter of Robert Frost, however, differs from the matter of Shakespeare or of Keats. Frost lived long and spoke his poems aloud on thousands of occasions, reading from one of his printed texts. If he had wished to sprinkle his lines with new commas, as one might salt a roast, he could have penciled them into his reading copy. If he had wished to add a question mark, or to delete a hyphen, it would have been simple to do so. In the absence of alterations, his repeatedly printed texts suggest intention.

His inconsistencies in punctuation and his deviations from standard practice bother a tidy mind. So a tidy mind will find relief in Lathem's revision, which insists on consistency to the exclusion of other criteria. But poets are notoriously innovative in punctuation, inventing combinations such as "—:" and "—;—?". E. E. Cummings would make an extreme example, but we need not go so far. William Butler Yeats arranged colons and dashes and semicolons among his lines not according to the conventions of prose but as notation for pause and pitch; T. S. Eliot's punctuation and capitalization were eccentric and expressive; among Frost's American contemporaries, Wallace Stevens most nearly abided by conventions of punctuation, but he was partial to an unorthodox colon; Marianne Moore was both scrupulous and inventive. Even Edwin Arlington Robinson, the one contemporary whom Frost praised, was given to coinages such as "—".

We await a history of punctuation in modern poetry. In the meantime, eccentric punctuation has perhaps been purposeful. Possibly some punctuation fails its purpose, but deliberate intent remains clear—to serve as notation of sound, a pale cousin of musical notation. Frost cared for the sound of verse. He went so far as to claim that words existed in order to make noises: "Words are only valuable in writing as they serve to indicate particular sentence sounds." Frost seemed not to have cared much for assonance, lush vowels rubbing against each other. He cared

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most for the cadence of talk, with the nudge and thrust of intelligence in pace and pitch. In his work he continually referred to a semantics of noise. "Remember," he told us, "that the sentence sound often says more than the words. . . ." "There are tones of voice that mean more than words." Another phrase he liked was "the sound of sense," the way cadence makes sense and sense makes cadence. ". . . if one is to be a poet he must learn to get cadences by skillfully breaking the sounds of sense with all their irregularity of accent across the regular beat of the metre."

Anyone who has read Frost's letters and essays is familiar with the theme of "sentence sounds" and "the sound of sense," Frost's contribution to modern poetics. Doubtless, both critical idea and poetic practice derive from Wordsworth; they are an extension of the desire to write with the material of the spoken idiom. And in his best poems Frost exemplifies again and again the miraculous wedding of speech and metrical line. If ever one feels puzzled by a phrase such as "breaking the sounds of sense . . . across the regular beat . . .," one can refresh one's understanding by listening to a stanza such as this one, from "A Patch of Old Snow":

There's a patch of old snow in a corner
That I should have guessed
Was a blow-away paper the rain
Had brought to rest.

Frost listens to speech and repeats it like a mimic. With a line break the poet expects some vocal indication (almost always a slight pause; often a change of pitch) to match the line structure visible on the printed page. Set as prose, Frost's lines make a sentence without tension: "There's a patch of old snow in a corner that I should have guessed was a blow-away paper the rain had brought to rest." Breaking the sounds of sense across the regular beat, Frost gives us "the rain / Had brought," making a pause both unnatural and wonderful, raising pitch on "rain" and hesitating between subject and verb.

Lathem was largely merciful with this poem; but he put a comma at the end of the first line, after "corner," where the line-ending pause is all the pause Frost wanted. (The added comma is of course grammatically incorrect.) Put a comma after "corner" and you pile pause on pause, slowing the poem down, making Frost's cadence sluggish.

I cite this alteration not because it destroys the poem but because it is typical. Unlike the comma in "lovely, dark, and deep," it is not confusing; it does not alter Frost's thought. Lathem adds punctuation that Frost omitted, and by so doing he slows things down. In the second line of "Stopping by Woods," Lathem changes Frost's "His house is in the village though" to "His house is in the village, though." Besides adding pause, Lathem adds pitch variety: we drop our voices when the comma isolates "though." It is no calamity, perhaps, to drop the voice—but we have Frost's word for it that "The living part of a poem is the intonation entangled somehow in the syntax idiom and

meaning of a sentence." By intonation we may know character. Maybe the speaker who runs over the pause—"His house is in the village though"—tosses away his notion more lightly than the speaker who pauses and lowers pitch: "His house is in the village, though." This latter fellow seems more calculating.

DOUBTLESS MANY READERS WILL FIND THESE objections quibbles, and think they resemble the discomfort of the princess troubled by a single pea under twenty mattresses. Many readers find a poem's identity in its paraphrase or summary, "what the poet is trying to say," instead of in its articulate body, its bulk and its shapely dance, its speech and color and tone and resolution, its wholeness, of which meaning is part. But a poem resembles a Henry Moore reclining figure at least as much as it resembles philosophical disquisition. Frost defined poetry as what gets lost in translation; the meaning, in the vulgar sense, is what gets translated. When you change the movement of a poem by adding pause, you alter the reclining figure's dimensions. Lathem adds 443 commas to Robert Frost's poems, thirteen colons, 156 long dashes (some replacing short dashes), and twenty-two semicolons. He adds three parentheses; he adds ellipses three times and deletes them twice. In most categories he deletes some instances of the punctuation mark; but when he deletes one he often adds another that indicates greater pause—a semicolon or a long dash replaces a comma.

Lathem also adds twelve question marks, altering not time but pitch and meaning. On many occasions, especially in narrative poems, Frost wrote sentences in the grammatical form of questions, but concluded with periods instead of question marks. In "Home Burial," the wife gazes out a window from which she can see her son's grave; Frost has the husband say:

"What is it you see
From up there always—for I want to know."

The idiom, grammar, and pacing embody the husband's state of mind. He feels his wife estranged and he wants the sensitivity he lacks. As Frost punctuated it, the husband begins the speech as a question, which he interrupts with a demand: "—for I want to know." Lathem alters and diminishes Frost's characterization of the husband by supplying the question mark. The question mark raises the pitch of "From up there always," sentence-sound is altered, and the husband's voice becomes gentler and less demanding.

Later in the poem, the wife remembers that her husband, after digging their child's grave, remarked casually how little time it took a birch fence to rot. She cannot forgive "talk like that at such a time!"

What had how long it takes a birch to rot
To do with what was in the darkened parlor.

Her sentence is not a question inviting an answer but a

statement of outrage. Lathem's question mark raises pitch and diffuses anger:

What had how long it takes a birch to rot
To do with what was in the darkened parlor?

Correctness makes politeness. For one more example, "The Witch of Coös" cackles at her son, "We'll never let them, will we, son! We'll never!" For Frost the exclamation is the thing. Lathem has the witch inquire: "We'll never let them, will we, son?"

Elsewhere, Lathem adds eighty-one hyphens and deletes 101. These alterations are as destructive as added commas and question marks, but the changes are more various and more difficult to describe. When Lathem emends "lower chamber" in "Storm Fear" to "lower-chamber," he alters the rhythm of the line: "low-" becomes louder than "chamb-". In "The Trial by Existence," Lathem turns "cliff-top" into "cliff top," slowing the line down by adding the percussion of equal volume. When Lathem changes "sun-burned" into "sunburned" ("Pan With Us"), and "tip-toe" into "tiptoe" ("The Death of the Hired Man"), he follows modern usage but he does not represent the sentence-sounds of *A Boy's Will* and *North of Boston*, Frost's first two books of poems. In "Hired Man," "barn-door" becomes "barn door," "harp-like" becomes "harplike," and, on the other hand, "college boy's" becomes "college-boy's." For Frost's "up hill" we have Lathem's "uphill" ("The Bonfire") and Frost's "down-hill" becomes Lathem's "downhill" ("The Gum-Gatherer"). In "A Lone Striker," "many, many eyed" travels a long distance to become "many-many-eyed," and Frost's pace is considerably quickened. In "Birches," Lathem removes five hyphens from Frost's fifty-nine lines. "Ice-storm" and "ice-storms" become "ice storm" and "ice storms," and "snow-crust" becomes "snow crust." One line loses three hyphens: "With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm" becomes "With all her matter of fact about the ice storm," with considerable change to the sentence-sound; "matter-of-fact" speeded the line up. In "The Last Mowing," Frost wrote the touching lines

There's a place called Far-away Meadow
We never shall mow in again. . .

which are destroyed in this edition. Surely that hesitation, that mini-mini-pause of the hyphen in "Far-away," makes delicate mimicry of emotion. Lathem's "Faraway Meadow" sounds like a real-estate agent's name for a subdivision.

For one more example let me cite a small change in a poem that some critics consider Frost's best work. "The Most of It" does not escape revision. "And then in the far distant water splashed" finds itself changed into "And then in the far-distant water splashed." Doubtless this addition of a hyphen is a small matter; its alteration of sound is slight. But if the hyphen does *not* change the sound of the line, why bother to add it? If it *does* change the sound of the line, how dare we alter Frost's sentence-sound?

EDWARD CONNERY LATHEM WAS GRADUATED FROM Dartmouth College in 1951, took a D. Phil. at Oxford in 1961, and was librarian of Dartmouth College from 1968 to 1978. A friend of Robert Frost's for many years, he is author or co-author of several publications connected with Frost, beginning with *Robert Frost: Farm-Poultryman*, edited with Frost's biographer, Lawrance Thompson, in 1963. They also edited *Robert Frost and the Lawrence, Massachusetts "High School Bulletin,"* in 1966. Also in 1966, Lathem and Hyde Cox edited the useful *Selected Prose of Robert Frost*; Frost's frequent omission of the expected comma goes uncorrected in his prose. In the same year, Lathem compiled *Interviews with Robert Frost* and in 1969 edited the complete poems.

It should be acknowledged that Lathem's notes, at the back of the text, record his emendations. And, of course, some of them are justified. Lathem discovered that broken type in an old edition had deleted a comma, a deletion scrupulously followed in subsequent editions; he restores this comma, clearly intended by the author. Lathem replaces English spelling with American; evidently Frost had expressed annoyance at the English spellings surviving in some of his poems. Also, Lathem standardizes practice in the use of double and single quotation marks. Although I cannot say that the old inconsistency bothered me, I find this alteration innocuous, because it is silent. These alterations are the editor's proper business.

In 1971, two years after his edition was greeted with some criticism, Lathem defended himself in an introduction to the Imprint Society's reprint of *The Poetry of Robert Frost*. He began with the statement that Frost requested help with a new collection which the poet did not live to make. "Following the appearance of *In the Clearing* in 1962," Lathem said, "Mr. Frost spoke with the current editor about such an undertaking and requested his assistance with parts of the overall task." When Frost died, in 1963, "the responsibility [for the undertaking] devolved upon his publishers and estate." (The executor of the Frost estate is Alfred Edwards, Frost's publisher at Holt, Rinehart and Winston; he came to Holt from the National City Bank of New York. It is understood that Lathem will succeed him as executor.) Lathem, chosen to be editor, arrived at the decision that "the general reader would often-times be helpfully served by some degree of editorial attention to the poems. . . . Thus, the desired objective could be attained of editorially enhancing textual clarity. . . ."

It would be difficult to object to the motives acknowledged in these passive sentences; but in looking back from the perspective of the completed text, "enhancing textual clarity" seems understatement and "some degree of editorial attention" gross euphemism. Lathem nowhere alleges that Frost authorized him to change the punctuation of his poetry. He quotes from a letter in which Frost spoke of his pride in omitting punctuation. As Lathem puts it: "[Frost] replied disarmingly [to the correspondent who complained about the 1930 *Collected Poems*]: 'I indulge a sort of indif-

ference to punctuation. I don't mean I despise it. I value it. But I seem rather willing to let other people look after it for me.' " At first glance, these sentences seem almost the permission Lathem requires. But the whole letter is not so much disarming as enraged. Leonidas W. Payne, Jr., chairman of the English Department at the University of Texas, had sent Frost a list of "errors" in the 1930 volume. After speaking of his indifference, Frost boasted about being able to write a telegram without using the word "stop," and continued: "I'll have those commas and hyphens tended to though, if only for your peace of mind." Enjoying his sarcasm, he went on: "You must remember I am not writing school-girl English"; defending an inversion, he said, ". . . the order should remind you of a very ancient figure of speech. Your friends of the Classical Department will tell you about it." If I had received this letter, I would not have characterized it as "disarming."

Although Frost appeared to give way to Payne on punctuation—"Fortunately it turned out you were wrong in all your findings of errors except the punctuational"—it is noteworthy that he lived thirty-three years after writing this letter without "[having] those commas and hyphens tended to . . ."

Acknowledging that Frost hated to be corrected, Lathem tells of three occasions on which Frost accepted correction during his lifetime; two of the suggestions were offered by Lathem himself. These corrections add commas to remove ambiguity. Because of a friend's puzzlement, Frost altered "To err is human, not to animal" to "To err is human, not to, animal." Lathem's suggestions were similar; but if Lathem, after years of association with Robert Frost, has only two corrected commas to tell us about, how can we accept his addition of 441 others? If we cannot accept these revisions, we may at least understand why Lathem hesitated to propose them to the living poet. As Lathem puts it, ". . . Frost did not actually relish having individuals challenge him regarding the punctuation of his verse . . ."

OF COURSE THE GREAT MAJORITY OF LATHEM'S changes do not remove ambiguity. Lathem's unauthorized repunctuations exist for the purpose of consistency—and they impose a consistency on Frost's poems that Frost gave no evidence of desiring. "Mr. Frost was," says Lathem, "in many ways, a very inconsistent person—as Emerson proclaims great souls are wont to be. (It was, withal, one of the myriad fascinating aspects of his personality.)" Fascinating as Lathem found Frost, surely the two men differed in character as thoroughly as they differed in prose style.

For Lathem is passionate on the subject of the consistency that his friend lacked. Consistency is *his* pride, as Frost's was self-reliance. Although Lathem acknowledges that "Diverse spellings and irregularity of practice in punctuation" are not "apt to render text unintelligible . . .", he

insists that "they can distract, puzzle, and indeed annoy readers, undesirably intruding upon an assimilation of what the author has wished to communicate."

Here I must object. The inconsistency of omitting question marks in "Home Burial" was itself communicative; the inconsistency of grouping "dark and deep" together rather than separating them by a comma was itself communicative. The poet who argued that sentence-sounds carry the thrust of meaning would not agree that altering these sounds facilitates communication: *these sentence-sounds are themselves the communication*.

As evidence supporting his revision of Frost's punctuation, Lathem cites Frost's performance of the poems preserved on records and tapes. He uses this device to support only "lovely, dark, and deep": ". . . literally scores of voice recordings exist of Frost saying his poems. Over and over again he is heard to give the three adjectives approximately equal stress, with no vocal suggestion that punctuation [might be otherwise]." Well, I also have listened to Frost and I do not agree; perhaps we hear what we expect to hear. In reading his poems, Frost was as inconsistent as he was in other matters, and he often hurried through them as if he wanted to get the reading done with. He kept to the meter, usually kept to the line break—but he would sometimes rush through the pauses his punctuation indicated; if we were to punctuate according to Frost's performance, we would find ourselves omitting many commas in his true text—and omitting periods, as well. His performance recalls another Frost comment on punctuation, quoted by Lathem: "I hate to depend on punctuation at all. I hate to end with a word in one sentence that might well belong to the next sentence."

But editors must not punctuate by performance. In "Ash-Wednesday," Eliot's text omits expected commas in "my legs my heart my liver . . ." But in performance he paused where we would expect commas in ordinary punctuation; perhaps the ear needs help the eye does not require. Should Eliot's future editor add commas to "Ash-Wednesday"? Wallace Stevens, equally skilled in meter and in free verse, had the most consistently beautiful ear among modern poets; but if his editor relied on his ghastly poetry readings, we could find periods between words in a single phrase, or the lines broken after every word, to represent the rhythm-destroying pauses of his speaking voice.

I raise an old question, never to be answered: What is a text? If a text is the product of consistent copy-editing designated as official by the poet's estate, then Lathem's Frost is Frost's text. But I would rather a poet's text represented a poet's *probable intentions*, even if these intentions were inconsistent. My editor's task is picayune, difficult, and humble; it serves the poet and the poetry. I would have my editor study manuscripts to discover printer's errors and unauthorized emendations, and study the poet's own texts and correspondence for clues to intended revision. Perhaps I would have him perform mechanical (preferably mandated) changes such as making English spelling

American, or regularizing double and single quotes. Perhaps I would have him repair the spellings of proper names, and footnote the original misspellings. To discover an author's intention is often difficult, since the evidence is often contradictory; we are grateful to editors who serve reader and poet in the cause of authenticity. Other modern poets—W. B. Yeats and Marianne Moore—have been edited with a scrupulous regard for their latest known intention.

It seems strange that there has not been more complaint about Lathem's Frost. However, some voices have been raised. Richard Poirier is perhaps Frost's best critic; in *Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing*, he complains of Lathem. William Pritchard, who teaches at Amherst and was acquainted with Frost, has spoken out on several occasions, including an *Atlantic* review of the Lathem book in October, 1970. Gerald Burns, in the *Southwest Review*, complained of "Lathem's hyperconservative commas, largely unnecessary in a poet who prided himself on writing lines you *couldn't* misread . . ." The most outraged commentary was published in *Partisan Review* by Frank Bidart, a poet whose control of speech tempo depends on ingenious, expressive, and eccentric punctuation.

But Lathem's corrupted text of Robert Frost is increasingly taken as the true text. When a critic or anthologist writes Holt for permission now, permission is granted to reprint from Lathem's edition. Not everyone does as he is told. Pritchard quoted the old text in *Lives of the Modern Poets*, as did Robert Pinsky in *The Situation of Poetry*. The first volume of Thompson's biography, published in 1966, uses Frost's punctuation; the second volume (dedicated to Lathem) and the third use Lathem's punctuation. Anthologists by and large do poorly. William Harmon's *The Oxford Book of American Light Verse* preserves the corrupt Lathem text. Richard Ellmann's *The New Oxford Book of American Verse* prints thirty-three poems, almost thirty pages' worth, and uses Lathem's version every time. These books seem especially regrettable, because Oxford books have the half-life of strontium 90. Ellmann's *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry* (edited in collaboration with Robert O'Clair) is possibly worse: here the text follows Lathem most of the time but occasionally follows both, as when "Stopping by Woods" has the "though" comma but not the "dark and deep" comma; occasionally it provides punctuation that neither Frost nor Lathem anticipated. In time, if we do nothing, sounds that are not Frost's sounds will be the only sounds one can hear—and Frost's own punctuation, when it turns up in an eccentric edition, will look like a misprint.

A responsible literary scholar should be commissioned to edit a variorum edition of Frost's poems. A variorum Frost should re-establish Frost's intended punctuation while a subtext records variations—including broken letters, English spellings, single or double quotes, and even Lathem's corruptions, for all I care. But the poet's sentence-sounds must return to the poet's page.□

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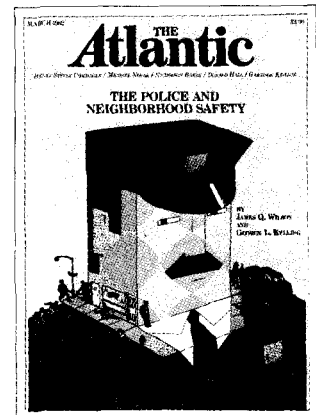
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An argument that social and cultural factors—not North American capitalism—created Latin poverty

WHY LATIN AMERICA IS POOR

BY MICHAEL NOVAK

"The principal guilt for the economic dependence of our countries rests with powers inspired by uncontrolled desire for gain, which leads to economic dictatorship and 'the international imperialism of money.'"

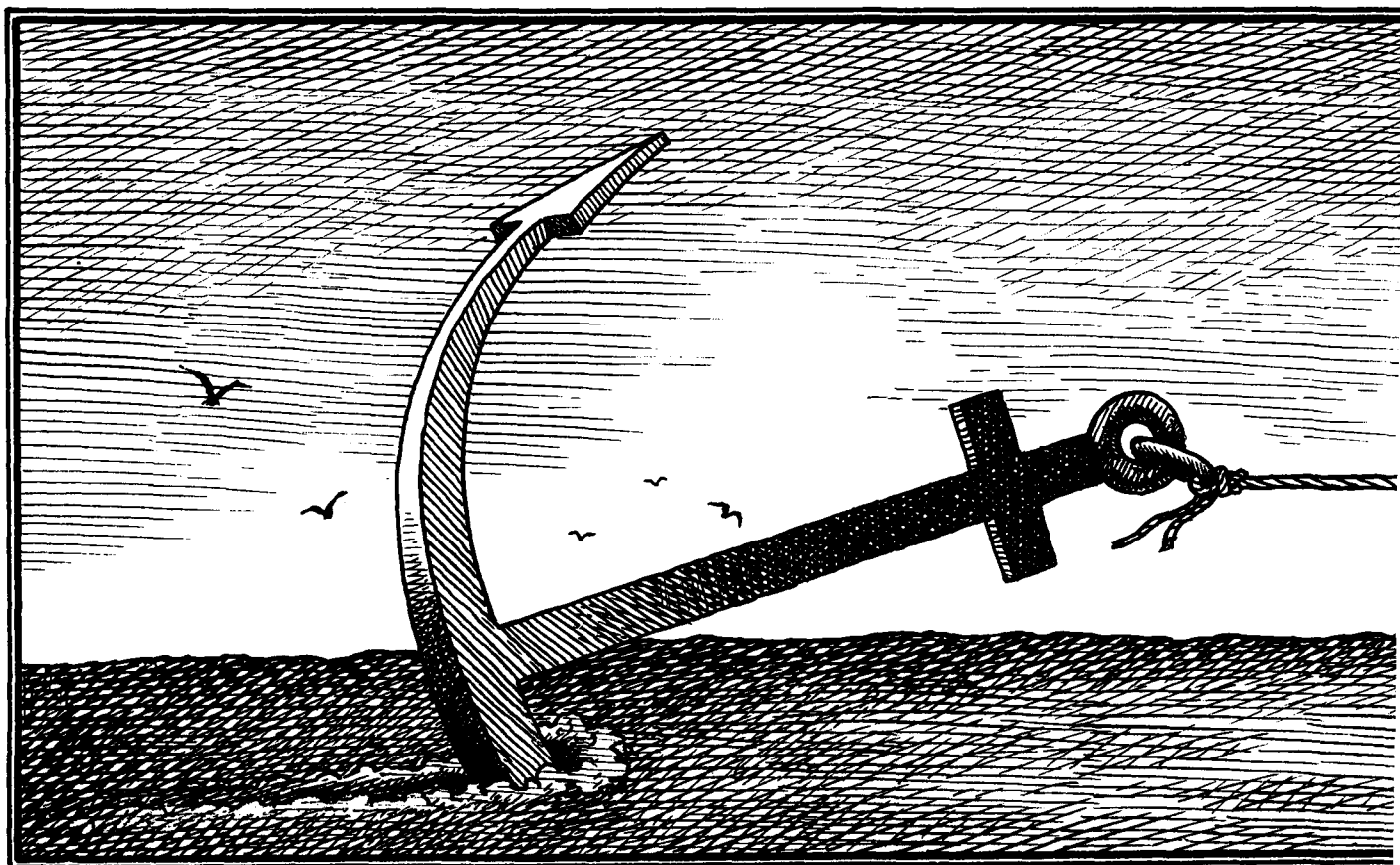
"Another feature of this economic situation is our subjection to capital interests in foreign lands. In many cases, these foreign interests exercise unchecked control, their power continues to grow, and they have no permanent interest in the countries of Latin America. Moreover, Latin American trade is jeopardized by its heavy dependence on the developed countries. They buy raw materials from Latin America at a cheap price, and then sell manufactured products to Latin America at ever higher prices; and these manufactured goods are necessary for Latin America's continuing development."

—Statement of the Conference of Latin American Bishops at Medellín, 1968

IT IS ODD, ON THE FACE OF IT, TO BLAME THE POVERTY of Latin America on North American capitalism. Such poverty, after all, is a great deal older than its purported cause. Two hundred years ago, Latin America was poorer than it is today; but so was North America. At that time, Adam Smith drew attention to the two contrasting experiments taking place in "the New World," one on the southern continent and one on the northern, one based on

the political economy of southern Europe, the other launching a new idea.

In those early days, Latin America seemed to have greater physical resources than North America. Much of its gold, silver, and lead ended up in the ornate churches and chapels of the Catholic Church in Spain and Portugal. Columbus himself, seeking gold and other precious resources, sailed under a Spanish flag. By contrast, the first



settlers in New England discovered little evidence of precious metals, and a relatively harsh agricultural environment. Even so, and by dint of great effort, they won from North America such riches as tobacco, furs, corn, and, later, cotton, which they traded to Europe for manufactured goods.

In 1800, there were about 4 million European settlers in the United States, about 900,000 blacks, and an "Indian" population estimated at one million. The population of Latin America was then more than three times larger, numbering 19 million, of which the original population of Indians, estimated at between 25 and 50 million in 1500, had been dramatically reduced. By 1940, the populations of the United States and Latin America were about equal—some 130 million each. By 1977, however, the population of the United States was relatively stable at 220 million whereas that of Latin America had shot up to 342 million.

In computing average per capita income, population is important in three ways. First, every newborn child lowers the average per capita income. Second, as the under-eighteen population increases in proportion, the relative number of productive workers decreases. Third, rapidly increasing populations indicate that many parents have decided in favor of larger families, through whatever combination of motives, and this preference, though it might be admirable, has its economic costs. Those who make that choice cannot properly blame others for its consequences.

Since 1940, the population of the United States has grown by 90 million, but that of Latin America has increased by 210 million.

In the nineteenth century, on both continents, independence was relatively new. Both had recently been colonies of the then greatest powers in Europe. All through the nineteenth century, trade between Latin America and North America was negligible. Nearly all trade by both continents was with Europe. In North America, the vast majority of persons became owners of their homes and lands; not so in Latin America. The moral-cultural system of North America placed great emphasis on building and working for tomorrow. The moral-cultural system of Latin America favored an emphasis on personal rather than civil and economic values. Either choice has its own costs and its own rewards.

Consider what might have been. Suppose that Latin America had developed industries and manufacturing before the United States did. Clearly, the resources were available. Latin America is rich in oil, tin, bauxite, and many other important minerals. Its farmlands and tropical gardens are luxuriant. Why, then, didn't Latin America become the richer of the two continents of the New World? The answer appears to lie in the nature of the Latin American political system, economic system, and moral-cultural system. The last is probably decisive. Latin America might have been economically active, progressive, and independent. Indeed, it had the advantage of re-



maining outside World Wars I and II. It might long ago have placed the United States in its economic shadow. Yet its bishops do not blame the Catholic Church, the political and economic systems those bishops have long supported, or the past values and choices of the Latin American people. They blame the United States.

Specific emphasis is placed upon practices of trade. Between 1900 and 1950, trade between Latin America and the United States did begin to grow, but by 1950 the value of U.S. investment in Latin America came to only \$4.6 billion. During World War II, Western Europe lay in rubble, its economies broken, and Japan lay economically prostrate. After the war, trade between the United States and Latin America continued to grow. Still, by 1965, the total value of all U.S. investments in Latin America was \$11 billion. By 1965, investments by Western European nations and Japan, just beginning to revive after World War II, were not of great significance. It seems preposterous to believe that such small sums are responsible for the poverty or the dependence of Latin America. They are neither a high proportion of the wealth of the investing nations nor a high proportion of Latin America's internally generated wealth. The total U.S. investment of \$11 billion averages out to \$44 per capita for the 250 million Latin Americans of 1965. Moreover, U.S. investments in Western Europe and developed nations such as Canada and Japan were higher, over time, without producing similar "dependence." Is it supposed that such investments in Latin America should have been forbidden altogether?

Traditional Catholic ignorance about modern economies may, in fact, have more to do with the poverty of Latin America than any other single factor. Consider the economic history of traditional Latin cultures.

LATIN CATHOLIC ECONOMICS

Max Weber observed that capitalism seemed to succeed first and most steadily in Protestant lands. He traced the origins of the modern capitalist ethos to Calvinism. Unfortunately, scholars observed, capitalism was also retarded, for ideological reasons, in certain Calvinist strongholds—Calvin's Geneva, for one. The empirical picture is a bit more complicated than Weber thought.

For example, Hugh R. Trevor-Roper noted that many of the great entrepreneurs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are to be distinguished less by the fact that many were Calvinists than by the fact that nearly all were immigrants. In addition to the Calvinists, there were Jews and Catholics. Thus Trevor-Roper asks, What made these entrepreneurs migrate? Why did they find some cities and some regimes hospitable and others (including some Cal-

vinist ones) inhospitable? The details of Trevor-Roper's argument, which I here summarize, are rich and the scholarship he cites broad. The basic picture he draws indicts Catholic Counter-Reformation economies, particularly that of the Castilian monarchy of Spain, then at the zenith of its imperial power.

Trevor-Roper uncovers many surprising patterns. He argues that the remote origins of capitalism, both as a system of production and as a technique of financing, lie in Catholic cities such as Antwerp, Liège, Lisbon, Augsburg, Milan, Lucca. "These were the centres of European capitalism in 1500," Trevor-Roper writes. Yet between 1550 and 1620 these centers were "convulsed, and the secret techniques of capitalism were carried away to other cities, to be applied in new lands." Why?

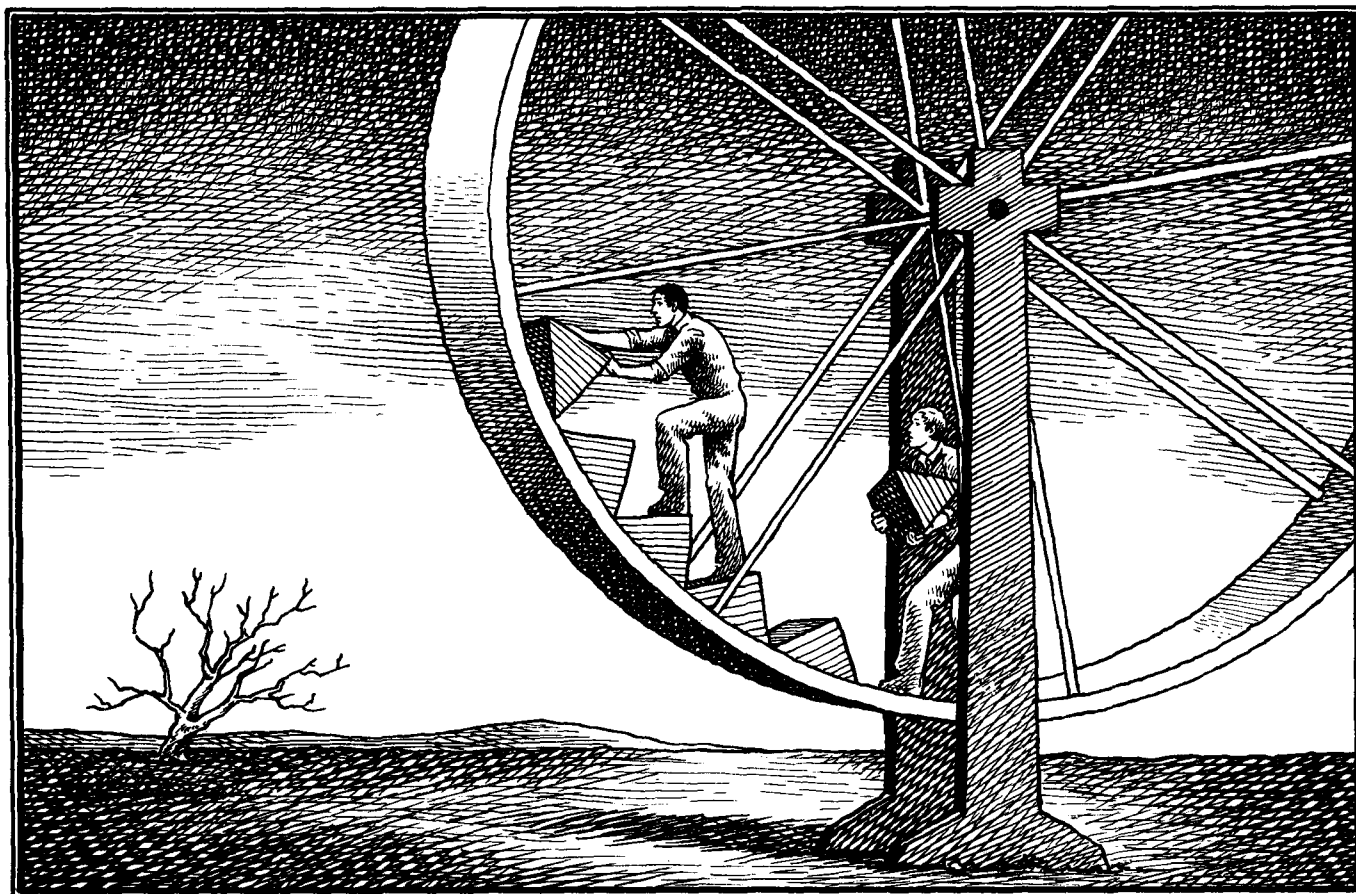
For Trevor-Roper, the decisive factor was a new alliance of Church and State, more intolerable with each passing year, which drove the new class of Catholic businessmen in some cases out of their church but in many cases out of their native cities and homelands. They sought cities no longer under the control of princes and bishops; they sought self-governing cities of a republican character.

A sharp contrast arose between such cities' liberalism and the economic shortsightedness of the Spanish Empire. Made rich by silver from South and Central America, the Spaniards, who represented the dominant Catholic state, misperceived the basis of their new economic strength. Officials of Church and State grew ever more numerous. They produced little, being parasitic upon the producers, whom they gouged and regulated until the latter emigrated. With relative suddenness, then, the strongholds of the Counter-Reformation declined economically and northern European centers of commerce gained the ascendancy. Trevor-Roper concludes: "The Calvinist and for that matter the Jewish entrepreneurs of northern Europe were not a new native growth: they were an old growth transplanted. Weber, in seeing the 'spirit of Capitalism' as something new, whose origins must be sought in the sixteenth century, inverted the problem. The novelty lay not in the entrepreneurs themselves, but in the circumstances which drove them to emigrate."

The Counter-Reformation state attempted to gain control of commerce. It banned or restricted enterprise in the private sector. It licensed certain entrepreneurs to develop state monopolies; it favored state mercantilism over private mercantilism. "It was a change," Trevor-Roper reports, "which occurred predominantly in countries of the Spanish clientele."

At the time of America's founding—Latin America and North America alike—Spain and Portugal were the world's dominant and most active powers. But the philosophers and theologians of Spain and Portugal failed to grasp the inner secret that had made them so and, careless of it, lost it. For their colonies in the New World as well as for their nations of birth, this failure of Catholic intelligence was a calamity.

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Latin Catholic theology remains in its pre-modern phase, as is evident—and not only in Latin lands—by such statements as the following, by the Catholic bishops of Peru in 1969:

Like other nations in the Third World, we are the victims of systems that exploit our natural resources, control our political decisions, and impose on us the cultural domination of their values and consumer civilization. . . . The more we try to change, the stronger the forces of domination become. Foreign interests increase their repressive measures by means of economic sanctions in the international markets and by control of loans and other types of aid. News agencies and the communications media, which are controlled by the powerful, do not express the rights of the weak; they distort reality by filtering information in accord with their vested interests.

"We are the victims," the bishops say. They accept no responsibility for three centuries of hostility to trade, commerce, and industry. They seem to imagine that loans and aid should be tendered them independent of economic laws, and that international markets should operate without economic sanctions. After having opposed modern economics for centuries, they claim to be aggrieved because others, once equally poor, have succeeded as they have not.

Are the bishops really expert in technical matters of international trade? Before pronouncing moral condemna-

tion, do they understand the laws that affect international currencies? Do they wish to enjoy the wealth of other systems without having first learned how wealth may be produced and without changing their own economic teachings? The Peruvian aristocracy and military were for three centuries under their tutelage. Did the Peruvian bishops for three centuries teach them that the vocation of the layman was to produce wealth, economic self-reliance, industry, and commerce, and to be creative stewards thereof?

This intellectual failure appears among North American bishops as well. In an unsigned pamphlet, "Development-Dependency: The Role of Multinational Corporations" (1974), the Catholic bishops of the United States say of themselves and their people, "We are a people . . . deeply committed in theory, if not in practice, to the philosophy or the ideology of free enterprise in the old-fashioned sense of the word. . . ." This statement, in form an empirical statement, is not true of the bishops themselves. It is not true of most American economists.

The text and footnotes of the bishops' statement are filled with misinformation and innuendo. An example:

In the period between 1950 and 1965, U.S. private corporations invested \$3.8 billion in Latin America. Part of the profits were retained in Latin America to increase the total investment of the companies concerned; part of the profits were remitted to the United States. From this investment of \$3.8 billion, no less than \$11.3 billion in

profits were remitted home to the United States, while the profits retained locally increased the investment of \$3.8 billion to \$10.3 billion.

There are several confusions in this passage, even if we accept its highly problematic figures. First, the total investment made by U.S. corporations between 1950 and 1965, as given, averages out to \$253 million per year. This does not seem like sufficient money to make all of Latin America "dependent." Second, the bishops ignore investments made before 1950, which, as we have seen, totaled \$4.6 billion. This figure must be added to the \$3.8 billion invested during 1950–1965 to figure the base on which a return is made. The bishops say that with reinvested profits, total investment during 1950–1965 reached \$10.3 billion. They do not give the cumulative total for the pre-1950 period. Finally, the bishops say that \$11.3 billion in profits was remitted to the United States during the fifteen years. There is no way of telling, from their figures, on what base of cumulative investment these returns should be calculated. But perhaps a simple illustration will do. Invested at 8 percent interest, money will double in about twelve years. In fifteen years, at that rate of return, an investment of \$10 billion should have *more than* doubled, simply if left in a bank. If the bishops intended to shock their readers concerning returns on Latin American investment during 1950–1965, they did not make the case.

DEPENDENCY

Consider the assertion of Archbishop Dom Helder Camara, of Brazil, before the World Council of Churches in 1970: "It is a sad fact that . . . 80 percent of the world's resources are at the disposal of 20 percent of the world's inhabitants." This assertion is not exactly true. Most of the world's oil, for example, appears to be in the hands of Venezuela, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, and Iran. Such curious expressions as "the Third World" and "the South" mask many contradictions. It cannot factually be said that all Third World nations are poor. Furthermore, most of the poor in the world—in India and other parts of Asia, including China—are to be found north of the equator. In fact, the word "resources," as used by the Archbishop, must also be stripped of ideology. What he describes as "a sad fact" is sad only if it is looked at from one ideological perspective. As a "fact" it is at best only partially true. Quite diverse cultural histories lie behind it.

The combustion engine was invented under democratic capitalism barely 150 years ago. The first oil well was dug in Titusville, Pennsylvania, in 1859, and the first oil well in the Middle East was dug only in 1908. Most of the materials we today call resources were not known to be such before the invention of a democratic-capitalist political economy; many were not known to be such even a hundred years ago. Such material remains inert until its secrets are

discovered and a technology for bending it to human purposes is invented. The word "resources," therefore, includes within its meaning the factor of culture, of which discovery and invention are expressions. Protestant European culture, in particular, has been exceedingly fertile in the discovery of such resources and in the invention of such technologies. Among Nobel Prize winners in science, Protestants have been conspicuous.

Thus Archbishop Camara might have observed, in fairness: "It is a marvelous fact that 80 percent—maybe even 90 percent—of the world's resources have been discovered and put to use during the past century by one of the smaller cultures on the planet. The benefits of such discoveries have been carried to every continent, but more must now be done in this direction." Dom Helder Camara, of course, was trying to make a moral rather than a scientific point. Furthermore, he was trying to make an ideological point. He was trying to suggest that there is something "sad" in the preeminence of a minority culture in the discovery of resources and in the invention of technologies for using them. Some cultures have organized their political economy precisely for this purpose. Others have not.

Nothing prevented Brazilians from inventing the combustion engine, the radio, the airplane, penicillin, and technologies that give resources their utility. Although Brazil is apparently one of the most richly endowed of all nations in material resources, neither Brazil nor other Latin American nations have so far provided a system favorable to invention and discovery. So, in a sense, the Archbishop's observation is merely a truism: Those cultures that value the intelligent and inventive use of God's creation are far better off than those that do not. He cannot mean to imply that intelligence and invention on the part of some obstruct intelligence and invention on the part of others, for that would be absurd. Latin America is responsible for its own condition. It had beginnings very like those of North America. The system established there has not been as successful as many would now like it to become.

As late as 1850, the difference between the per capita income of Latin America and that of North America was not great. Most of the technologies the world now knows had not then been invented. Oceangoing vessels were still creaking wood and billowing sail. Although steam-powered locomotives were in use, they were still primitive and few. Most agricultural labor was by hand, and such machinery as had been invented—for instance the reaper and the combine—was pulled by animals. Highways were designed for horseback, carriage, and cart. Wars were fought with muskets and cannon.

In population, Latin America in 1850 numbered 33 million, the United States 23 million (and all North America 26 million). Manufacturing was more highly developed in a few states in North America than anywhere in Latin America, but both continents were largely agricultural. The mining industries of Latin America were far more im-

portant than those of North America. The economy of Western Europe was stronger than that of either continent of the New World, and both continents depended upon Europe for most of their manufactures. But in some respects, certain regions of both continents enjoyed a higher standard of living than southern Italy, parts of Spain and Portugal, and other sectors of Europe, and both, therefore, attracted immigrants.

In 1850, Great Britain was just completing seventy straight years during which, with a dynamism never before matched in history, its economic output grew by an average of nearly 2 percent a year. This seemingly miraculous achievement introduced into the world the reality of economic development. It also gave material substance to the notion of "progress," which had long fascinated the imagination of the West. Spain also had colonies but did not have similar economic policies. In Britain, the law of patents had greatly stimulated invention, as had the Royal Society. In every decade and in almost every year, new technologies excited the populace. Invention was the source of British wealth.

Why, then, did the paths of North America and Latin America dramatically diverge after 1850? Why for the next hundred years did the economy of one remain almost static while the other steadily but ever more rapidly developed? During that century, North America hardly needed Latin America. Latin America hardly needed North America. The volume of trade between them was highest in 1892, when the U.S. exported goods worth \$96 million to Latin America and imported \$290 million worth.

Latin Americans do not value the same moral qualities North Americans do. The two cultures see the world quite differently. Latin Americans seem to feel inferior to North Americans in practical matters but superior in spiritual ones. In Latin American experience, powerful personages control almost everything. From this experience, it is easy to imagine that the whole world must work this way, and to project such expectations upon North America. It must be said, then, that relations between North and South America are emotional as well as economic. The "Catholic" aristocratic ethic of Latin America places more emphasis on luck, heroism, status, and *figura* than the relatively "Protestant" ethic of North America, which values diligence, regularity, and the responsible seizure of opportunity. Given two such different ways of looking at the world, intense love-hate relations are bound to develop. Looking at North America, Latins are likely to attribute its more advanced status to luck—and also to a kind of aristocratic power. In their experience, wealth is relatively static, and what is given to one is taken from another.

By contrast, looking at Latin America, a North American is likely to attribute its backwardness to an ethos better suited to aristocrats, monks, and peasants, who lack respect for commerce and industrial life and the moral virtues on which these depend. As Latin Americans do not admire Northern virtues, North Americans do not entirely

approve of Latin virtues. Thus most North Americans are likely to feel not a shred of guilt for the relative economic position of the two continents.

However, some North Americans are susceptible to the guilt feelings that flow from the reverse side of the "Protestant" ethic: the demand for perfect charity. Some feel unworthy of their own success. Some take many accusations to heart. They are inclined to believe Gustavo Gutiérrez's accusation in his best-selling *A Theology of Liberation*:

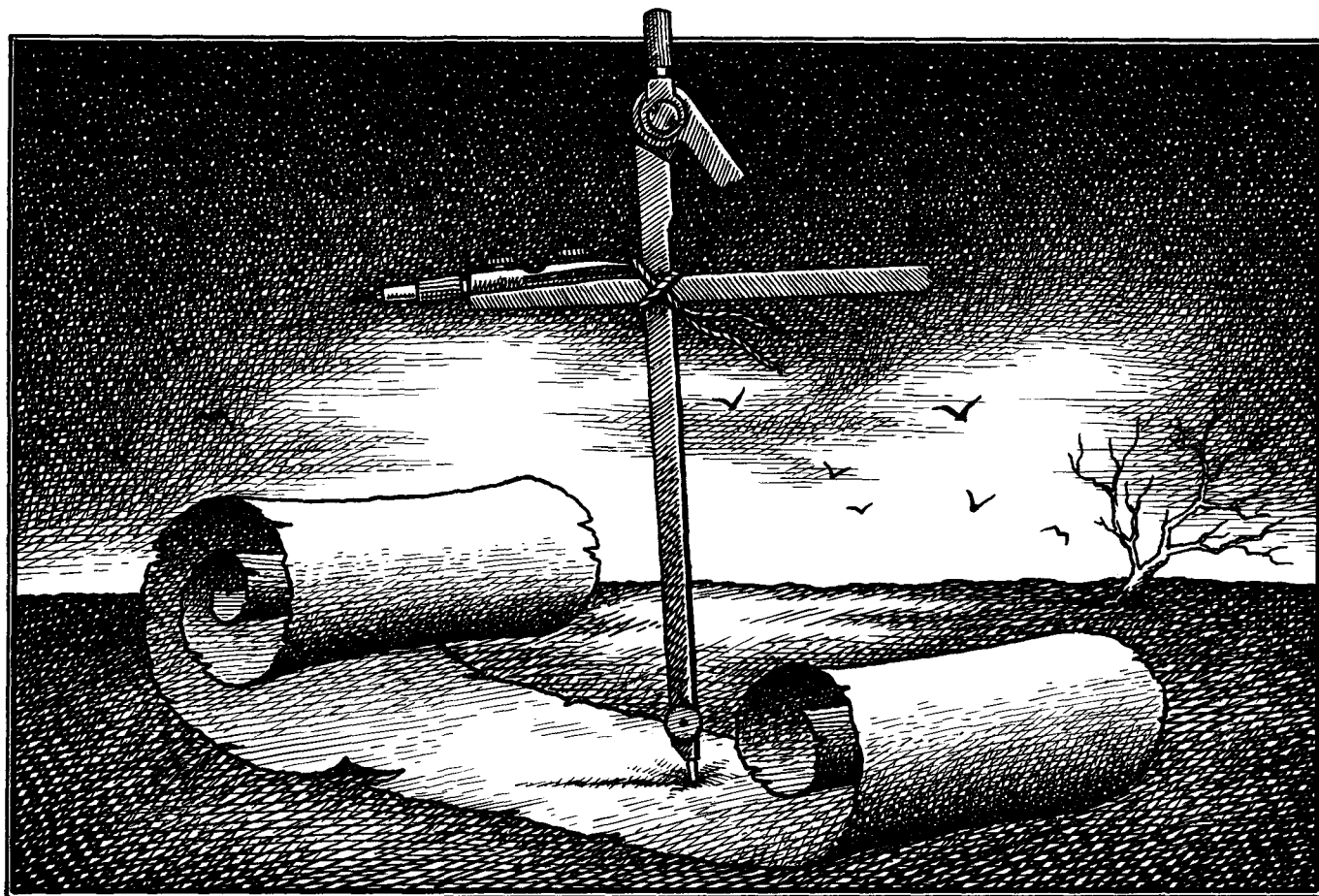
The underdevelopment of poor countries, as an overall social fact, appears in the historical by-product of the development of other countries. The dynamics of the capitalist economy lead to the establishment of a center and a periphery, simultaneously generating progress and wealth for the few, and social imbalances, political tensions, and poverty for the many.

Gutiérrez believes that the decisive liberation for Latin America will be socialism: liberation from private property. This is not a theological interpretation of development but an economic one. Moreover, his thesis of dependency is only one economic theory among many. It cannot be said to have biblical authority. It does not square with many of the facts. It has many internal problems of its own.

Official reports of the UN Economic Commission on Latin America give the most accurate portrait of the available facts. A brilliant young scholar who worked for that commission, Joseph Ramos, an economist for the UN's International Labor Organization and a professor at the Catholic Latin American Institute on Doctrine and Social Studies (ILADES), in Santiago, prepared background papers on economics for the Catholic bishops' meeting at Puebla in 1979, and has elsewhere replied to Gutiérrez courteously and eloquently. In what follows, I draw upon his assessment of the economics of liberation theology, upon the UN statistical record, and upon U.S. Department of Commerce reports. In particular, I follow his review of Gutiérrez's book.

First, in embracing the dependency theory and the center-periphery theory, Gutiérrez inherits all the factual and theoretical weaknesses of those theories. In an interdependent world, every nation is dependent upon every other. The most highly developed nations are quite dependent upon the oil-producing nations, for example. If one regards the oil nations as part of the periphery, they are, clearly, able to exploit nations in the center. If they are now to be located in the center—having until recently been on the periphery—then the original theory of center-periphery is a truism: a "center" is any self-reliant, economically active locale.

Second, Gutiérrez seems to think that progress and riches in one place *must* subtract from what is available in another place. In fact, since the Industrial Revolution, the world economy has become expansive and dynamic. There



is today far more wealth than there was 200 years ago. In absolute terms, the wealth of virtually every nation and region is greater than it was. Average life expectancy is higher. Hygiene and health are better. Some modernization has been achieved. Yet relatively, individual nations rise and fall as events, needs, and exertions favor first one, then another. The rise of Japan has been as spectacular as the decline of Great Britain.

Moreover, the mere existence of dependency does not mean that the underdevelopment of Latin America is a consequence of the development of the United States, or vice versa. A battery of facts, says Ramos, must be accounted for: (1) Only 5 percent of total U.S. investment is made abroad, and only 7 percent of the nation's production is exported. The United States depends relatively little on foreign trade. (2) About 70 percent of U.S. foreign investments and exports go to developed countries. Less than 20 percent of U.S. foreign investment goes to Latin America. U.S. investment in Latin America represents less than one percent of the U.S. gross national product. (3) The average rate of return on U.S. investments in Latin America has not been particularly high, either before 1950 or during the years 1950 to 1977. This return has been higher than in Canada but about the same as in Europe, Australia, Asia, and Africa. (4) The often-repeated statement that U.S. investors in the Third World take out more in profit than they invest is, for all sound investments, a tru-

ism. To invest \$1,000 in a savings account for ten years is to hope to withdraw significantly more than the original \$1,000. These new funds are then available for new investment elsewhere. Without such growth, economies stagnate and investment is futile. One might as well be a miser. (5) To argue that U.S. corporate profits depend to a high degree on investments in the Third World is to err. Only about 200 U.S. firms account for most of U.S. investments overseas. Of these, virtually all make most of their investments in the United States and in the developed world. Seventeen percent of their foreign investments are in Latin America. About twenty firms account for half of all U.S. overseas profits. For such U.S. transnationals—General Motors and General Electric, for example—investments and sales within the United States are, year by year, more than ten times greater than those in the Third World. In some years, profits made in some operations make up for costs incurred for new investments elsewhere. One must examine investments over time. (6) The United States has for many years suffered a balance-of-trade deficit; the total value of its imports exceeds that of its exports. The net effect is a weakening of the dollar in relation to other currencies.

These six facts oblige Professor Ramos to reject the center-periphery theory of dependence. Belief in such a dubious theory hinges, of course, on other assumptions. Professor Ramos also deals with these. Suppose, he says,

exploitation does exist. The exploitation of one people by another has existed since the beginning of history. "However, until the Industrial Revolution, no people, no matter how exploitative or imperialist they were, could reach a generalized, sustained level of economic development." A few nations first reached this level through science, technology, and economic organization. The "wealth" of the center is far more a consequence of such factors than of colonial development. The contrast between Great Britain and Spain since 1500 permits no other conclusion.

Second, Gutiérrez may find it "attractive to place the fundamental blame for our problems on dependency (and by so doing blame others)," Ramos writes, but "might not this dependence rather be a reflection of the internal obstacles to development which are encountered within our countries?" Ramos notes that each currently developed country also began in dependency. "The United States broke out of its dependency on what was then the greatest world power, while Latin America, colonized at the same time, still fails to do so." Since Spain and Portugal are among the most underdeveloped countries of Europe, Ramos suggests that "internal structures common to Latin American and Iberian countries are the fundamental obstacles to overcoming underdevelopment for us as much as for them."

In the same vein, Gutiérrez believes that underdevelopment in Latin America is a consequence of "private property." But Ramos calls attention to a special characteristic of Latin American property rights: "the initial extreme concentration of economic and political power (since Colonial times) in the hands of a few, and the consequent limitation of opportunities." In the United States, by contrast, property, power, and opportunities were distributed much more equally from the beginning. For Ramos, a narrow concentration of wealth has negative effects quite visible in regional variations both in the United States and in Latin America. In the U.S. South, where power and wealth were concentrated in the landholding system, vigorous development was delayed until after World War II. By contrast, the Midwest and Far West, even though they were also agricultural regions, experienced more rapid development through a system of family property and relative equality. In Latin America, agricultural regions, held tightly in a few hands, are most backward. Thus development seems to depend on the diffusion of private property.

Third, when Gutiérrez rejects sentimental appeals to brotherhood, which disguise class conflict, Ramos appreciates his desire to abolish the causes of class conflict. But he finds Gutiérrez "ideological and ahistorical" in overlooking "the most significant economic fact of modern times, namely that wealth can be created." All economies prior to the Industrial Revolution were (relatively) static. Under static conditions, the economic improvement of some is necessarily obtained at the cost of others. For this reason, "the central concern of static economies, like the medieval

one, has been the fixing of just prices and salaries." In the early medieval economy, capital did not produce new wealth. Thus the taking of interest was judged to involve the terrible sin of usury, since through it one took advantage of those in need. But once capital became creative and its utility in economic progress became clear, moral interpretation was obliged to shift its ground. Ramos urges Gutiérrez to shift ground too, by recognizing that relations of mutual advantage and cooperation are essential to dynamic economies, even though relations of conflict never disappear.

Ramos does not accept the Marxist theory that classes are rooted in the relation to property. For him the relation to power is more significant, and assumes different forms in different times and places. Relative scarcity yields one common form of economic power. Such scarcity may involve land, water, transport, capital, technology, knowledge, oil, arms. "It does not suffice to have property in order to dominate; domination requires the possession of the critical form of power in each historical moment." At different times in history, the military caste, the clergy, the landlords, the industrialists, the bankers, the politicians, the technocrats, have been preeminent. There is not one class struggle but many; and their root is not property but power. As a result, class struggle will not disappear with the abolition of private property. Struggle over the political allocation of power and goods is historically one of the most bitter forms of struggle. Nationalization of ownership always generates class struggle, to the extent that the participation of citizens is only a formality, while decision-making lies in the hands of the party, the bureaucracy, and the police. Private property is a device to limit the power of the State. It undergirds the principle of subsidiarity, by giving citizens rights to make decisions about what each knows best.

Finally, Ramos deplores "the exaggerated tendency of Catholic theology to interpret social relations as if they were the same as interpersonal relations." The error of socialists is to trust the ideals of socialism while disregarding their structural results. Gutiérrez ends his book with a plea for "a definitive stand, and without reservations, on the side of the oppressed classes and dominated peoples." His good motives are clear. But the unintended consequences of his economic theories are not likely to constitute the liberation he desires.

In matters of political economy, much stands or falls on fact. The liberation theologians widely assert that development and reform in Latin America are not working. Not working *compared with what*? It is worth pausing to reflect on the facts, first of success, then of failure.

THE SUCCESS OF LATIN AMERICA

In 1945, the population of Latin America was 140 million. Between 1945 and 1960, the gross national product of Latin America averaged an annual growth rate of 4.9 per-

cent. From 1960 to 1965, the rate was 5.3 percent; from 1965 to 1970, 5.7 percent; and from 1970 to 1974, 6.7 percent. The world recession slowed growth in Latin America in 1975 (2.7 percent); in 1976 the rate was back up to 5 percent.

Thus, for the thirty years from 1945 to 1975, Latin America averaged an annual growth of 5.2 percent. Few regions of the world exhibit such a sustained success. In this century, the wealth of Latin America has doubled, and then doubled again, more than once. Since World War II, manufacturing has grown at a rate of 6.5 percent each year. In addition, agricultural output per worker grew by more than 2 percent a year, and total agricultural output by 3.5 percent each year. Since population growth aver-

aged 2.7 percent a year, agricultural yield has grown faster. This compared favorably with agricultural output in the United States from the end of the Civil War until World War I, when agricultural output grew at 2.1 percent a year and average output per worker at 2.5 percent.

In real terms, wages and salaries in Latin America have grown since World War II at an average of 2 percent a year. This is better than the United States experienced from 1865 to 1914. Wages and salaries have not grown as fast, however, as returns on capital. In part this is because large agricultural sectors, with expanding populations, share slowly in the development of commerce and industry, which occurs in cities. Rising returns on capital tend to attract new capital. While dynamic growth in some sectors does not automatically flow to other sectors, it does provide new wealth, which sound political systems may invest in rural electrification and other advances.

The rates of growth in real wages, in manufacturing, and in agricultural income and output per worker are all the more remarkable when one recognizes that during the same thirty-year period, 1945 to 1975, Latin America's population grew from 140 million to 324 million. Yet despite Latin America's immense growth in population, its per capita income has grown at rates seldom equaled on so sustained a basis anywhere in the world. Per capita income in Latin America in 1976 is estimated to have been between \$750 and \$1,000.

In thirty years (1945-1975), infant mortality was reduced from 83 per 1,000 births to 46 per 1,000. Life expectancy advanced from approximately forty-two years to sixty-two years. Despite immense population growth, illiteracy has been reduced from 50 percent to 25 percent (absolute numbers, though, remain large: about 80 million persons are illiterate). In 1945, only 55 percent of primary-school-age children attended school; the figure in 1975 was 90 percent. In high school, the increase was from 10 percent to 35 percent. The percentage of those from twenty to twenty-four years old attending universities has risen from 2 percent to 9 percent.

Obviously, these figures cry out for improvement. Still, what accounts for the sudden explosion of growth in 1945, after centuries of relative stagnation? Foreign aid and foreign investment cannot account for it, since together these make up less than 4 percent of Latin America's annual internal investment. Favorable terms of foreign trade do not account for it, for these terms are less favorable than in the nineteenth century. Structural reforms cannot account for it, for these have been relatively few; there have been few major land reforms, tax reforms, or dramatic institutional reforms.

In the opinion of Ramos, the most satisfactory explanation is that the advantages of being a "late starter" have finally been seized. Latin Americans are closing the technological, organizational, and management gaps that once separated them from the developed world. The power of ideals and intelligence, learning and application, is much in



HOW IT HAPPENS

1.
The gulls
 peel and swoop,
skimming the water like Israeli jets.
2.
The fish
 leap
for what they think is cover.
3.
The gulls
 grapple and drag;
legs, beak, complete the strike.
4.
The fish
 splinter
into light, are extinguished.
5.
The gulls
 peel and climb
back to their familiar stable currents.
6.
The water
 betrays
nothing.

—David Solway

evidence. Religion itself is becoming more dynamic. There has been a breakthrough in the ranks of the narrow elite at the top. It has not yet reached millions at the bottom, but revolutions in "human capital" have set a great dynamic in motion. Whereas, for example, USAID officers once struck Latin Americans as better prepared than their local counterparts, today Latin American economists and experienced officials have training and skills superior to those of the average foreign adviser. Finally, late-starting nations may take advantage of already developed technologies and thus devote relatively less capital to research and development.

THE FAILURE OF LATIN AMERICA

Impressive growth in GNP, in per capita income, in literacy, in education, in health, and in longevity represent human goods of great value to Latin America. But such figures also mask inequality, uneven distribution, and widespread suffering.

In a paper produced for the Catholic Social Action Center of Latin America in 1978, economists Sergio Molina and Sebastian Piñera calculated that in 1970 about 40 percent of all Latin Americans (some 115 million persons) received an income below the poverty line of approximately \$200 per year. Still lower on the scale of poverty, at the destitution level, about 19 percent (some 56 million persons) received less than the \$100 per year required to buy food providing a minimum level of calories and protein for subsistence. It is clear that the fruits of spectacular economic growth are not reaching all parts of the population. The 50 million destitute need urgent care. The total 115 million poor need rapid improvement of their condition. Between 1960 and 1970, the percentage of the poor fell from 51 percent to 40 percent and of the destitute from 26 percent to 19 percent. But because of population growth, absolute figures were virtually unchanged (down only about 2 million in each category).

What would it take to raise all Latin Americans above the destitution line? Molina, Piñera, and Ramos calculate \$100 per year for 50 million persons, or \$5 billion annually. To raise all the destitute and the poor above the poverty line would require another \$11 billion per year. This \$16 billion represents (depending upon its exact calculation) about 5 percent of Latin American GNP. As a percentage of government spending in 1970, it would have represented 22 percent. As a percentage of the continent's total disposable income in 1970, it represented about 6 percent.

These figures show that Latin America already has at its disposal sufficient annual income and gross national

product to raise the level of its 50 million destitute persons almost immediately. The economic capacity is present. The political will and the economic techniques may not yet be present. Techniques that do not discourage greater production are indispensable. On the other hand, the diffusion of purchasing power to the poorest 25 percent of the population is in the interest of domestic manufacturers, farmers, and traders. An additional healthy 50 million persons would provide markets for goods and promote new forms of economic activism. In a dynamic economy, the economic activities and skills of each person offer mutual advantage to others.

Molina and Piñera observe that income differentials among employees explain only about half the difference in per capita income between poor and non-poor households. The rest is explained by the fact that the non-poor tend to have a higher number of employed adults per household and a lower number of dependent minors. The vast majority of heads of households are employed. A high percentage complains of underemployment (less than thirty-nine hours a week) and desires more. Simultaneously, many large social tasks remain unaccomplished. The economic infrastructure to support future growth will require investment and labor to build roads and bridges, sewage and sanitation facilities, generators and power lines, communications systems and urban water supplies, rural irrigation and facilities for transport.

The case of Brazil is often cited. Ramos points out that prior to 1964 the nonmilitary governments in Brazil sustained an average annual growth rate of 5.5 percent a year. After the military coup in 1964, the growth rate jumped to 9 percent a year. By 1970, every decile of the population had benefited in real terms. Relatively, however, the poorest deciles were receiving a lesser proportion of national income, the upper deciles a larger proportion. Between 1970 and 1976, the relative position as well as the absolute position of the poorest deciles improved. Still, the contrast between the richest and the poorest is stark. Behind the cold statistics there are families whose children lack sufficient calories and protein for normal activities and normal growth.

Ramos proposes that \$5 billion be invested every year for ten years (a total of \$50 billion), from funds already internally generated in Latin America, to improve the lot of the destitute. The exact schemes he proposes for this ten-year crash program need not detain us, for they are matters best decided by Latin Americans. The central point Ramos makes is that of scale. The problem of reaching the destitute and the poor is not insuperable. Resources are available. □

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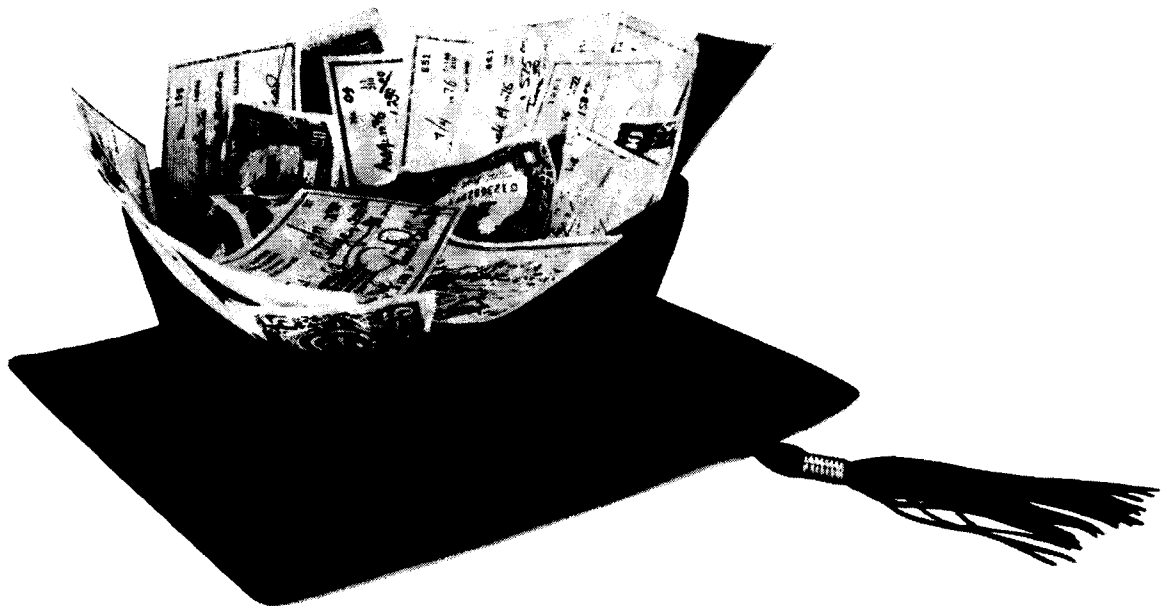
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MY STEPMOTHER, MYSELF

BY GARRISON KEILLOR



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CAROL WALD

RECENTLY IN WEESEVILLE, Pennsylvania, a woman was dismissed from her job as a human-resources coordinator and driven over a cliff by an angry mob of villagers carrying flaming torches and hurling sharp rocks after they learned that she was married to a man who had custody of his three children by a previous marriage.

In California, soon after her marriage to a prince (her first marriage, his seventh), a woman named Sharon Mittel was shut up in a dungeon under the provisions of that state's Cruel and Unnatural Parent Act, which allows the immediate imprisonment of a stepparent upon the complaint of a stepchild. The prince's oldest daughter accused Sharon of slapping her. She was later freed after an appeal to a king, but she now faces a long series of tests to prove her innocence, such as finding a tree of pure gold and a seedless grapefruit. She also must answer some riddles.

Are these merely two isolated incidents? Or are they, as a new and exhaustive report on stepmothers clearly points out, fairly indicative?

"The myth of the evil stepmother is still with us," the report concludes. "Stepmothers are still associated with the words *cruel* and *wicked*, which has made them easy targets for torture and banishment as well as severely limiting their employment, particularly in the so-called 'caring' professions such as nursing, social work, and education. The myth that stepmothers use poisons and potions has virtually barred them from the food and drug industries. In general, stepmothers are not only underpaid and underemployed but also feared and despised."

How cruel is the typical stepmother?

Not very, according to the report, which examines many cases of alleged cruelty and finds almost all of them untrue. "The media have jumped on every little misunderstanding, and have blown it up to outlandish proportions," the report finds.

Recently, three stepdaughters whose

relationships with their stepmothers are well known agreed to speak out and set the record straight. Because each has suffered from publicity in the past and is trying to lead as normal a life as possible under the circumstances, only first names will be used.

SNOW

The story the press told was that I was in a life-threatening situation as a child and that the primary causal factor was my stepmother's envy. I can see now that there were other factors, and that I didn't give *her* much reinforcement—but anyway, the story was that I escaped from her and was taken in by dwarves and she found me and poisoned me with an apple and I was dead and the prince fell in love with me and brought me back to life and we got married, etcetera, etcetera. And that is what I believed right up to the day I walked out on him. I felt like I owed my life to Jeff because he had begged the dwarves for my body and carried it away and so the apple was shaken loose from my throat. That's why I married him. Out of gratitude.

As I look back on it, I can see that that was a very poor basis for a relationship. I was traumatized, I had been lying in a coffin under glass for *years*, and I got up and married the first guy I laid eyes on. The big prince. My hero.

Now I can see how sick our marriage was. He was always begging me to lie still and close my eyes and hold my breath. He could only relate to me as a dead person. He couldn't accept me as a living woman with needs and desires of my own. It is terribly hard for a woman to come to terms with the fact that her husband is a necrophiliac, because, of course, when it all starts, you aren't aware of what's going on—you're dead.

In trying to come to terms with myself, I've had to come to terms with my

Garrison Keillor is the host of Prairie Home Companion, which is regularly broadcast every Saturday night on National Public Radio.

stepmother and her envy of my beauty, which made our relationship so destructive. She was a victim of the male attitude that prizes youth over maturity when it comes to women. Men can't dominate the mature woman, so they equate youth with beauty. In fact, she *was* beautiful, but the mirror (which, of course, reflected that male attitude) presented her with a poor self-image and turned her against me.

But the press never wrote the truth about that.

Or about the dwarves. All I can say is that they should have been named Dopey, Sleepy, Slimy, Sleazy, Dirty, Disgusting, and Sexist. The fact is that I *knew* the apple was poisoned. For me, it was the only way out.

GRETEL

When Hansel and I negotiated the sale of book rights to Grimm Bros., he and I retained the right of final approval of the manuscript and agreed to split the proceeds fifty-fifty. We shook hands on it and I thought the deal was set, but then his lawyers put me under a spell, and when I woke up, they had rewritten the contract and the book too! I couldn't believe it! Not only did the new contract cut me out (under the terms, I was to get ten shiny baubles out of the first fortune the book earned and three trinkets for each additional fortune) but the book was pure fiction.

Suddenly he was portrayed as the strong and resourceful one, a regular little knight, and I came off as a weak sister. Dad was shown as a loving father who was talked into abandoning us in the forest by Gladys, our "wicked" stepmother.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

My brother was a basket case from the moment the birds ate his bread crumbs. He lay down in a heap and whimpered, and I had to slap him a couple times *hard* to make him walk. Now the little wiener makes himself out to be the hero who kept telling me, "Don't cry, Gretel." Ha! The only crying I did was from sheer exhaustion carrying him on my back.

As for Dad, he was no bleeding heart. He was very much into that whole wood-cutter/peasant/yeoman scene—cock-fighting, bullbaiting, going to the village on Saturday to get drunk and watch a garroting or a boiling—don't kid yourself, Gladys couldn't send us to our rooms without his say-so. The truth is



that he was in favor of the forest idea from the word go.

What I can't understand is why they had to lie about it. Many, *many* parents left their children in the forest in those days. It was nothing unusual.

Nowadays, we tend to forget that famine can be a very difficult experience for a family. For many parents, ditching the kids was not only a solution, it was an act of faith. They believed that ravens would bring morsels of food in their beaks, or that wolves would take care of the kids, or a frog would, or that the fairies would step in. Dwarves, a hermit, a band of pilgrims, a kindly shepherd, *somebody*. And they were right.

And that is why I was never seriously worried for one single moment while we were there. Deep down, I always knew we would make it.

I don't mean to say that it wasn't a trying experience, an *emotional* experience. It was. And yet there isn't a single documented case of a child left in the forest who suffered any lasting damage. You look at those children today and you will find they are better people for having gone through it. Except for my brother, that is. *The little jerk*. He and my father live in luxurious manors with beautiful tapestries and banners and ballrooms, and I live above an alchemist's shop in a tiny garret they call a condo. As for Gladys, she was kicked out without so much as a property settlement. She didn't even get half of the hut. I guess she is the one who suffered most. Her and the witch.

I often think about the witch—I ask myself, Why did I give her the shove? After all, it wasn't me she was after.

I guess that, back then, I wasn't prepared to understand her type of militance. I couldn't see that she was fattening up Hansel in order to make a very radical statement. If only I had. Not that I necessarily would have joined her in making that statement, but I would have seen that from her point of view it had validity and meaning.

And I would have seen that Gladys, in proposing the forest as a viable alternative, was offering me independence at a very early age.

I wish I had been able to thank her.

CINDERELLA

A woman in my position does not find it easy to "come out of the palace," so to speak, and to provide intimate details of her personal life. I do so only because I believe it is time to put the Cinderella myth to rest once and for all—the myth that one can escape housework by marrying a prince.

The truth is that I am busier than ever. Supervising a large household staff—cooks, maids, footmen, pages, ladies-in-waiting, minstrels and troubadours, a bard or two—is just plain hard work. Often I find myself longing for the "good old days" when my stepmother made me sweep the hearth.

We see each other almost every day—she comes up here and we play tennis or I go down there for lunch—and we often reminisce and laugh about our little disagreements. She is one of my best friends. Other people treat me like royalty but she treats me like a real person. My husband won't let me touch a broom, but I go to her house and she puts me to

work! I love it. I tell her, "Mother, you're the only one who yells at me. Don't ever stop." And I mean it. Anger is real. It's honest.

Honesty is a rare commodity in a palace, and that is why so many "fairy-tale" marriages end up on the rocks. You wouldn't believe the amount of fawning and flattering that goes on! Between the courtiers bowing and scraping and the suppliants and petitioners wheedling and whining, and the scheming of bishops and barons, not to mention the sorcery and witchcraft, the atmosphere is such that it's terribly hard for a man and a woman to establish a loving, trusting, sharing type of relationship.

It's true that we lived happily ever after, but believe me, we have had to work at it! □

FASHION TIME IS MONEY

BY HOLLY BRUBACH

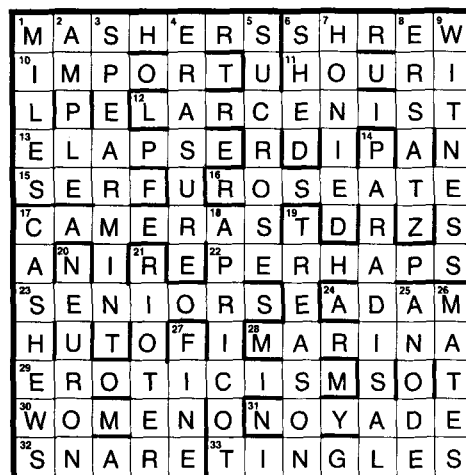


FASHION TODAY IS coined in the street and then, by a process that is the visual equivalent of word-of-mouth, new styles come to be recognized and adopted by more people, reproduced by other manufacturers, and finally abandoned out of snobbery or boredom. There is no real accounting for the trends that take hold, except to say that certain items capture better than others the way people would like to see themselves at a particular time.

During the late sixties and early seventies, the status symbol women wore was a scarf "signed" by a famous designer. A signature scarf could bring an air of worldliness to an otherwise mundane outfit, even jeans and a T-shirt. By her scarf, we understood that a woman was well-versed in fashion but not a slave to it. She could think for herself, pick and choose rather than buy an outfit to be assembled, like a kit, according to the designer's instructions. The designer's only say was in what a scarf looked like, in how it was made. But once out of the designer's hands, it could be worn any

Holly Brubach, who has written about fashion for Vogue and Saturday Review, wears an inexpensive watch that is handsome but hopelessly inaccurate.

Answers to the February Puzzler, "COUPLES"



The couple spelled out is Robin Hood and Marian. Answers are given in the order of their appearance in the clues, but with their proper numbers assigned.

Across. 1. MAS-HERS 33. TINGLES (hidden) 6. SHREW(d) 32. SNARE (anag.) 31. NOYADE (anag.) 10. IM-PORT 30. WO(ME)N 11. HOUR-I 12. L(ARCEN)IST (Caren anag.) 29. EROTICISM (anag.) 28. MARINA (anag.) 13. ELAPSE (anag.) 15. SERF (hidden) 24. A-DAM 23. SENIORS (anag.) 16. R(O)SEATE (anag. + o) 22. PER(H)APS (anag. + h) 17. CAMERAS (anag.) Down. 26. MATES (anag.) 1. MILES (double def.) 2. AM-P(L)E 25. A-NODE 14. PARADISAL (anag.) 3. SPEARMINT (anag.) 4. ERA-SURE 19. T-REASON 18. A-PRICOT (a + anag.) 5. SUCROSE (anag.) 6. SHE'D 27. FINE (double def.) 7. HONIED (anag.) 21. RIOTER (anag.) 8. ERSATZ (hidden) 20. NEURON (anag.) 17. CASH-EW-S (we rev.) 9. WITNESS (anag.)

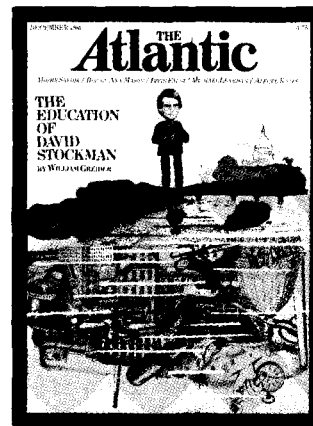
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way at all, not necessarily as intended. Fashion changed; its focus shifted from a full-length impression, a silhouette, to beautifully designed individual items seen in closeup. As the most important of these items, the signature scarf has given way to the watch. A scarf is decorative, but a watch is functional—more in earnest, in keeping with the way people now dress.

Five or ten years ago, the preferred status watch was a Cartier Tank model—sleek, elegant, with Roman numerals on the face, a lizard strap, and (extra points) a deployant, or snap, buckle, a deluxe and expensive optional feature. Today, the Tank continues to sell well, but the watch that makes even bigger claims for the person wearing it is the stainless-steel-and-gold Rolex Oyster (better yet, all gold). The Rolex is cur-

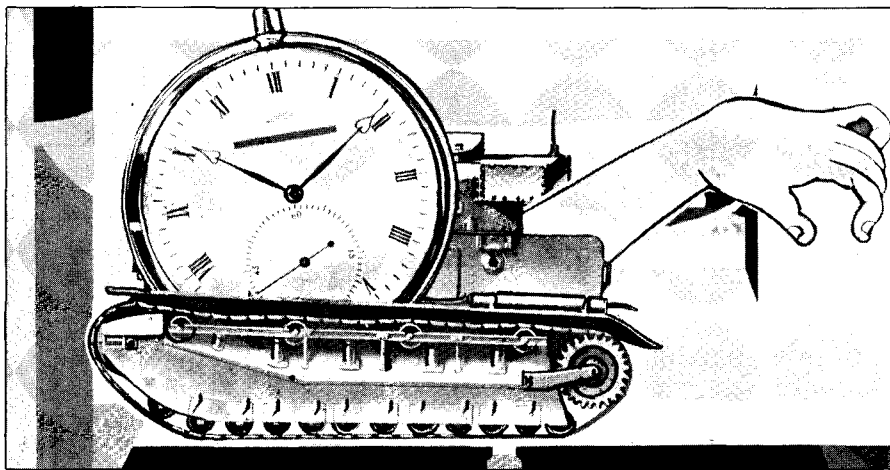
much of our current thinking about fashion might herald a new age of reason, but it also arises, at least in part, from economic despair. As incomes fail to keep pace with inflation, people find themselves able to buy less. Nevertheless, they buy expensive clothes. For the past five years, the prevailing fashion philosophy has been one of “investment dressing”—in clothes that may cost more than most but that pay dividends because they’re well made, of good-quality materials, and intended to be worn for years; they will never go out of style. This notion of stockpiling attains absurd new heights in Corum’s watch with a gold ingot—or a twenty-dollar gold piece, Krugerrand, or First Empire Napoleon—for a face. With expensive clothes now rationalized as “investments,” the ingot watch is an asset that

genders. The feminine was jewelry. A face without numerals or a bracelet in place of a band makes a watch more ornamental, less mechanical—form comes before the watch’s actual function. Women’s watches were small, often set in a graceful, ornate case that might otherwise have been a locket or the setting for a cameo; the band was dainty—a narrow, elasticized link bracelet or a double strand of black silk cord. By contrast, the masculine watch was a small appliance without a trace of vanity. The dial was larger and more legible than the dial on a woman’s watch; the strap was broader and usually leather.

Then, in the mid-1960s, the distinction between men’s and women’s watches became confused. One of the trademarks of the “mod” style, launched on London’s Carnaby Street and spread all over the world, was a large, man’s-size watch on a wide, striped, or bright-colored band—worn by men and women alike. By the early 1970s, women could wear the Tank watch, in a smaller size, even though the original was designed for men, the men of the World War I American Tank Corps. Most popular watches today are, like the Tank, standard for both men and women; scale is the only means for telling them apart.

The old extremes—the ornamental and the mechanical—still exist, but watch manufacturers no longer take the difference between the sexes so much for granted. Concord’s thin quartz Delirium, for example, perpetuates the old “feminine” notion of the watch disguised as jewelry. But the Delirium, made for men as well as for women, isn’t so much decorative as implausible—it looks too slim and graceful to work. A Porsche watch, on the other hand, is in the more mechanical, masculine tradition: all matte black anodized steel with white markings on the dial and a red, needlelike second hand, it looks like a fixture lifted from the dashboard of a racing car—and the women’s model looks the same, only smaller.

Another watch along conventionally masculine lines is the Rolex Oyster. Not even a diamond bezel on the most glorified version of this watch can detract from its seriousness of purpose. One admires a Rolex for its forthrightness: it doesn’t pretend to be anything but a watch. Utility has become a style unto itself, as people who live in lofts and furnish them with industrial fixtures demonstrate; in those terms, a Rolex seems



rently among Tiffany’s three best sellers, which is reason to suspect that its days as a status symbol are numbered: no sooner will everybody and his brother buy one than its glamour will fade and it will go back to being just another expensive watch.

Watches have for centuries stood for their owners’ economic and social status; in 1850, one silver pocket model, designed for the Turkish market, came nested in four cases, more than enough to protect the mechanism from desert sand. The only reason for so many cases was that four were more impressive than two or three.

What most people appreciate about an expensive watch now is that it’s outside fashion, the way clothes strive to be. That a Cartier Santos watch, based on a seventy-five-year-old design, still looks handsome is proof that its style is classic. The pragmatism that pervades so

looks as though it could easily be liquidated, redeemed at face value.

“ALWAYS DO MORE than is absolutely necessary,” said Georges Piaget, founder of the watchmaking company that still bears his name and follows his motto (one of its models features a diamond-paved face and an emerald-and-diamond-checked strap). The lengths to which manufacturers—and the people who buy their watches—go today in their attempts to outdo one another are no less ridiculous than the watch with four cases. Concord boasts the thinnest watch in the world, the Delirium, at a slim 0.98 millimeters. (You can never be too rich nor your watch too thin.) The Rolex Oyster is pressure-proof to an underwater depth of 165 feet, which is a lot deeper than most people ever have occasion to swim.

It used to be that watches came in two

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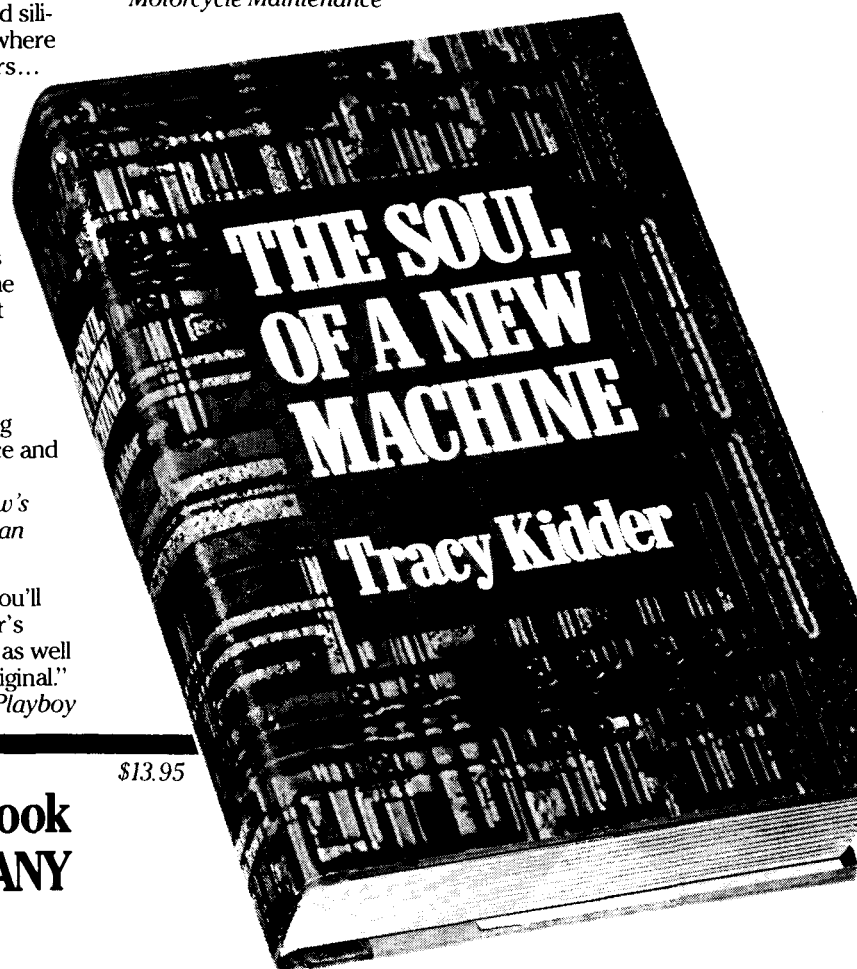
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Even someone like this reviewer, who barely understood the difference between computer hardware and software when he began, was able to follow every step." —*Christopher Lehmann-Haupt,*

New York Times

"A superb book, one that computer engineering has deserved for a long time.... All the incredible complexity and chaos and exploitation and loneliness and strange, half-mad beauty of this field are honestly and correctly drawn here." —*Robert Pirsig, author of Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*



Sixth Printing

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**An Atlantic Monthly Press Book
LITTLE, BROWN and COMPANY**

like the right watch, the watch of the moment.

If a Rolex is "high-tech," Cartier's Santos watch is higher tech. With tiny screws in the bezel and all the way around the edges of the band, the Santos looks as if anyone with a toy screwdriver and an hour to kill could take it apart and put it back together again. By 1979, when Cartier introduced its Santos collection, nearly every other watchmaker had come out with a Tank-style model of its own, and for those who insisted on the Cartier name on the face, thousands of counterfeit Tank watches were finding their way onto the market at so-called discount prices. (Last October, Cartier had more than one million dollars' worth of confiscated fakes ceremoniously crushed by an eight-ton steamroller.) The Tank watch threatened to become

posthumous use of his reputation, publishes a booklet about his life. The Oyster ad campaign pictures the hands of Arnold Palmer, John Cheever, and Yehudi Menuhin, among others. And Cartier, in reintroducing the Santos watch, presented awards to eight "pioneers" in their fields—among them, Truman Capote, Andy Warhol, Beverly Sills, and Reggie Jackson. We are invited to buy not only a watch but membership in a club.

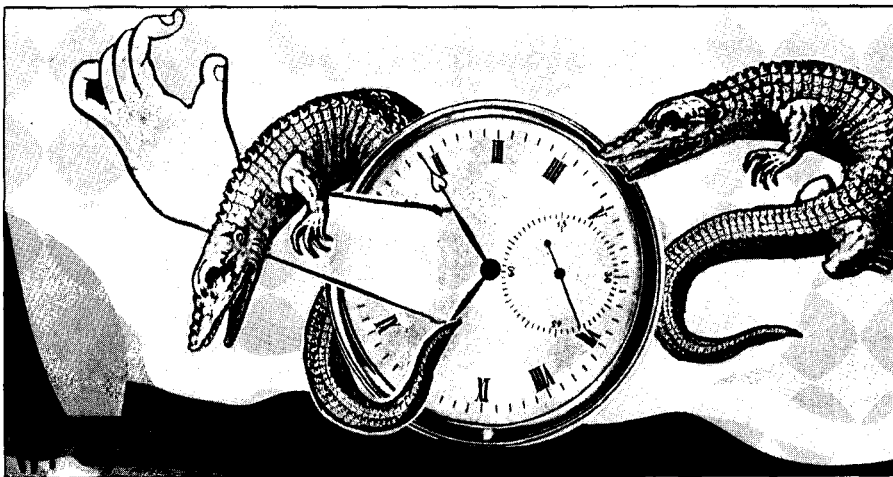
A high price, while it doesn't guarantee precision or great design or even precious materials, does ensure some exclusivity. Of course, there are expensive watches so ostentatious that they're tackier than a vinyl-strapped Timex. And there are well-designed watches that don't cost all that much. In fact, of the scores of watches on the market to-

tached to a film executive who wears a Donald Duck watch, or a chairman of the board who swears by the Timex that he bought twenty years ago in a dime store.

OUR NOTION OF TIME has changed, and the current fixation on watches proves it. Magazines, television, and movies weave a romantic fantasy around successful career men and women with interesting work, high incomes, full schedules, and two or more houses in different time zones. These mythical people set the standard by which we measure ourselves: they are efficient, energetic, never bored—their every minute counts. The clothes they wear are just plain clothes; they haven't got time for fashion (too frivolous). As a matter of fact, what's fashionable right now is to be too busy to get to the store. Shopping is a pastime for the idle rich.

The watch that would seem to make the most of an active person's few spare moments is digital, and not especially decorative. Most of these are made by companies that manufacture calculators, not by jewelers. Some of the more recent models include an hourly chime, a stopwatch, a calculator, a game, or a musical alarm that plays "Dixie," "Greensleeves," or "Clementine"—in renditions only slightly more lyrical than "Three Blind Mice" on a Touch-Tone phone. These watches beg to be worn by a bi-coastal cable-TV producer, someone who rides the crest of the wave of the future. Like it or not, the electronic age is upon us, and the owner of a Betamax, a Walkman, and a home computer can now buy a watch to match. But for all its fascination, its beeps and flashing numbers, the electronic aesthetic is decidedly limited in its appeal. A digital watch with gadgets is a novelty. At prices as low as ten and usually no higher than a hundred dollars, it's too accessible to qualify as a status symbol.

For many people, a watch has become a talisman. The anxiety-ridden man (or woman) who nervously glances at his watch every few minutes out of habit now finds in it some symbolic reassurance: You are an important person. That's the message a watch, as the index of its owner's net worth, is meant to convey. The more valuable your time, the more expensive your watch. And if it's a Rolex or maybe a Santos—whatever happens to be the watch of the moment—it proves you're not only in the money, you're in the know as well. □



commonplace. The Rolex was already the up-and-coming watch.

In reviving the Santos design, Cartier revised it significantly, by changing the original leather strap to a metal band. The watch, which started out looking not all that different from the Tank, was consequently made to look more like its competition, the Rolex. Though the similarities between them are self-evident, Cartier sidesteps suspicion by advertising its own claim to history: the Santos watch, invented in 1904 by Louis Cartier for a friend, the aviator Alberto Santos-Dumont, was the world's first wristwatch, so it must predate the Oyster and the Tank.

The only selling point stronger than history is probably celebrity. Patek Philippe gets in a little of each with advertisements for "Tolstoi's Timepiece." Rolex has named a collection for Benvenuto Cellini, and, as if to repay him for the

day, there are relatively few different styles. Manufacturers latch on to the most successful designs and copy them—if not exactly, closely enough to be associated with, or maybe mistaken for, the original. The Cartier Tank design turns up repeatedly in watches by Seiko, Tiffany, and Concord. The Rolex Oyster surely set the example for similar models by Seiko and Heller. You don't have to be rich to look rich—at least from a distance.

Not everyone chooses to enter the status stakes, of course. Non-conformists who used to declare their identity by taking a stand against the establishment have a harder time casting themselves as outlaws today, when designers no longer make the rules by which we dress. For all those new Rolex owners proudly leaving Tiffany's, there are many others who refuse to wear a status watch on principle. There's some perverse status at-

BOOKS

WHAT IT WAS LIKE

BY MAUREEN HOWARD

FLAWS IN THE GLASS: A Self-Portrait
by Patrick White. Viking, \$14.95.

SCENES OF CHILDHOOD

by Sylvia Townsend Warner. Viking, \$10.95.



STRICTLY SPEAKING, NEITHER Patrick White's *Flaws in the Glass* nor Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Scenes of Childhood* is an autobiography. In the one case, Patrick White, the Australian novelist who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1973, insists on the constricting subtitle "A Self-Portrait." In the other, Miss Warner, the British writer known to us primarily through her stories in *The New Yorker*, never intended to write an autobiography: her memoirs have been "ordered into sequence" by a doting editor after her death. But we've learned by now that there is no proper form, no set procedure, for autobiography.

In *Flaws in the Glass*, Patrick White assumes nothing. He is from Australia, and that is a world that he knows must always be explained. It's a place he loves and wrangles with endlessly, a bulky spot on the map, a raw country, an imitation of society "back home." He is a homosexual and wants to be both explicit and private about it. He is a serious artist who has been pushed to autobiography at the age of sixty-nine because he wants to speak his piece directly and take charge of the facts.

The best sections of *Flaws in the Glass* have about them a feeling of necessity, a driven quality that seems the result of asking a brilliant and cranky man the simple question "What was it like?" White's answer is sometimes pettish, sometimes grand. His book is a series of monologues, mostly bitter but with flickers of joy, delivered at the tag end of history as he has seen it, as he has known it: a self-portrait, Patrick White insists, yet one that seems more like a

wavery and mottled reflection of himself.

He starts boldly, with Paddy as a boy of fourteen, a lonely and proud outsider vacationing with his family in a rented house in Sussex during the summer of 1926. The child depicted here—precocious, asthmatic, blessed with a wonderful ear and a fine eye for detail but generally unappealing—was impressed with the mystery of two occasions: "... my first erection and my first poem: first ripples on the tide of passion..." Body and soul, life and art—these ancient, haunting divisions, the cruel joke of the spirit caged in poor human flesh: that is what the autobiography will be about. There are other conflicts, too: the effort to reconcile the affluent, mindless, and inattentive household of his parents with the genial and engaging world of the servants who nurtured him is a source of great confusion. His life abounds with contradictions and dualities:

The ultimate spiritual union is probably as impossible to achieve as the perfect work of art or the unflawed human relationship. In matters of faith, art, and love I have had to reconcile myself to starting again where I began.

Looking back instructs him: from an early age he knew that he was set apart, at odds with his family and the stuffy attitudes of haute-bourgeois Sydney: "It was a long time before I was conscious of connecting boredom with undiluted Anglo-Saxon blood." But the connection is made over and over again. It is servants, foreigners, outcasts (like himself), whom he's drawn to—a romantic, even sentimental notion. White makes it clear that the frail spinsters, the inspired Jews, the mystic blacks, and the maimed who figure in his novels are not only sympathetic figures to him in literature and in life but are aspects of himself.

Maureen Howard is the author of a forthcoming novel, *Grace Abounding*. Her books include *Facts of Life*, an autobiography, and the novels *Before My Time* and *Bridgeport Bus*.

March report on

ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS BOOKS

As *The Atlantic* moves toward its 125th anniversary, what could be more fitting than to publish the memoirs of the vigorous and influential man whose connection with the magazine and the Atlantic Monthly Press—from 1924 to the present—is longer than any other person's in our long history?

EDWARD WEEKS was editor-in-chief from 1938 to 1966, and his **WRITERS AND FRIENDS** is the ebullient narrative of his years as a nationally known editor, writer, and lecturer. Here are affectionate portraits of the many writer-friends whose careers were entwined with his; tributes to his colleagues in magazine and book publishing; narratives of his travels across this and other continents in search of new authors and new ideas.

What the reader of **WRITERS AND FRIENDS** (a companion volume to Mr. Weeks's *My Green Age*) will find here is a great editor at work, dreaming and planning for the next issue, the next Atlantic Monthly Press book, the next manuscripts by Nordhoff and Hall, Catherine Drinker Bowen, Katherine Hulme, James Thurber, Peter Ustinov, Joseph Wambaugh, James Alan McPherson. Editing is an absorbing profession, and no one has been more joyously absorbed in it than Edward Weeks, who is still on the road, behind the lectern, and at his desk.

WRITERS AND FRIENDS
by Edward Weeks

\$15.95 at your bookstore

LITTLE, BROWN

The masks I put on in my fictions are very different from those which strangers try to force on me, or to use another metaphor, the characters of whom I am composed cannot include those not yet revealed to me. At the age of sixty-nine I am still embarking on voyages of exploration which I hope may lead to discovery.

Double values abound amongst those I used to respect; and as for myself, I have never disguised a belief that, as an artist, my face is many-faceted, my body protean, according to time, climate, and the demands of fiction.

It is helpful to know that White has used himself to advantage in his work and that he is not just a sulky loner, though he is full of self-accusation in *Flaws in the Glass*. An embarrassing, sickly boy, unlikely son for a rich grazier, he became the victim of his mother's Australian snobbery when he was sent off to England to be educated. "Dickie and Bird," the "Ideal Couple," as he calls his parents, mocking their unimaginative union, were the most ordinary sort of prosperous, uncultured folk. They appear here as a foolish and negligent couple, the mother particularly cool and worldly in a provincial way, demanding an English education for her son's good. Four years at a public school, four at university—a long sentence for a boy who lacked social grace and spoke with a colonial accent.

Somehow Patrick White groped toward the theater and writing novels, and fell into a fashionable and dissolute life. It is the fashion he repudiates more than the drunken nights in London and New York. The whole of his youth is seen as pathetic and fumbling, though it was then that he began to sense how important writing was to him and learned that his sexual adventures were a poor substitute for something that would lead him to a worthier life. By his own admission there is a puritanical streak in White, and if this autobiography has any shape it is that of a moral history: unfocused youth is followed by reluctant but necessary duty in the RAF during World War II. Manly in his uniform, dedicating himself to the nonsensical task of censoring soldiers' letters home, he emerges from his years of service ready to fall in love and resume his work as a writer.

The most coherent episode in *Flaws in the Glass* chronicles White's years as an

intelligence officer in the Middle East, a time after the confusion of his youth and before the pressure of his vocation set in. As usual, he found himself more in tune with oddballs and common soldiers than with the regular officers and gentlemen. It's a good story, starting with his evasion of duty in the fleshpots of Manhattan and ending with his commitment to Manoly Lascaris, the Greek he has lived with in the forty years since.

Patrick White's was a late flowering, like Samuel Butler's and George Bernard Shaw's, two puritanical predecessors who set themselves apart from ordinary society by hard work and willed eccentricity. And all three of these men, who were disturbed by their sensuality, settled into strict, enduring relationships that in many ways mirrored the bourgeois lives they so detested. White is at once open about Manoly—"this small Greek of immense moral strength, who became the central mandala in my life's hitherto messy design"—and extremely private. There are fuller portraits of White's cousins, servants, and artistic friends than of Manoly, who becomes a shadowy and idealized figure.

Flaws in the Glass remains interesting where it concerns Patrick White's work, his decision as a novelist to go back to Australia and try to reconcile European culture with that of a new world, to figure out his responses to the landscape and the people of an infuriating colonial land that he will always love with great reservation. Again, this tough demand for honesty reminds me of Butler and Shaw, but White has one trick card that they would never allow—a mystic streak. His faith is not merely irrational, it stands opposed to reason. For those who know how well White can dramatize acts of faith in his fiction, this autobiography will seem weak and muddled when it aspires to high thought. His ideas, such as they are, seem like vague misreadings of Kierkegaard or the modern mysticism of Teilhard de Chardin. All this talk of belief, with glancing tributes to Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Jung thrown in, is highly impressionistic and best brought off in White's novels—in particular, *Voss*, *Riders in the Chariot*, and *The Solid Mandala*—where the possibility of magic in the world and the grace of its chosen souls (outsiders all) is turned to real art.

This is not a charming autobiography. Patrick White would hate to have his readers think of him as an affable man.

He is arrogant, stopping to bore us with chatty lists of family connections, gossip incidents, rambling peripheral stories. Blinded by his admiration for Manoly, he indulges in a long account of their trips to Greece, material that should have stayed in a personal travel journal. Then, too, he pays off old scores—derides the Queen and her consort and celebrities of Australia, dismisses the Nobel Prize—all too easily. Only in the last third of the book, when he delivers an unsparing self-assessment and asserts his belief in kindness, work, and the sacred connections we can establish to the shoddy world, does he retrieve my good will.

"My work as a writer," Patrick White says, "has always been what I understood as an offering in the absence of other gifts." The other side of such humility is pride: this autobiographical self-portrait reflects the double nature of the man, and I believe it is as he wants it—thoughtful, shallow, entertaining, dull, good for long stretches, and honestly bad: as flawed as the old laureate in the looking glass.

Flaws in the Glass will be of interest to those who study Patrick White and to readers, like myself, who take great pleasure in his novels. It will not stand as a fine work on its own: perhaps White's reluctance to write an autobiography shows through. The occasion is only the novelist's age and prominence, a nagging necessity rather than a real desire to have imagined this book. We must look back to *The Education of Henry Adams* for a model of artistic necessity or to Nabokov's *Speak Memory* for that balance of true feeling and intelligence in which the personal and cultural tales unite and move us.

THOUGH THE INDIVIDUAL pieces in *Scenes of Childhood* are charming, bright, and well turned, I think the book as a whole does Miss Warner's memory a disservice. As they read about the bizarre nanny, the intriguing French teacher, her mother's culinary innocence (all done in fairly short takes), those who followed Miss Warner's *New Yorker* stories will be reminded of an easy literary style, an anecdotal manner, a tidy trans-Atlantic package of prose that, like a jar of special jam from Fortnum & Mason, is soon devoured, soon forgotten.

She was better than this in many ways, often writing stories that reflected upon English lives under the

pressure of a changing social order. Her sense of place—the restored country house that has distracted its tenants from their failing marriage, the spiffy London flat without a history—can be as fine as Elizabeth Bowen's. But Miss Warner's method in sketching these memoirs is so hasty that she doesn't take time to set up a world. The point of an incident is that the butler was sinister or that her mother was imperious, and that point must be delivered with wit and a twist of delicate irony. The setting—an educated, upper-class household—is assumed; Miss Warner's father was a master at Harrow. The time, in twenty-four of the twenty-eight pieces, is Edwardian England as it maintained itself up to and including the romance of World War I. Sylvia Townsend Warner meant only to entertain, like the much-loved writers and actors who banded together to give us *Upstairs, Downstairs*, that elevated soap opera that everyone said was "so well done."

How are we to believe in *Scenes of Childhood* without the elaborate costumes and sets, without the plummy voices of the privileged and the dropped hatches of the lower orders? We must rely on Miss Warner's faultless prose, tight, elegant, and archaic. Those who yearn for the old days of the untroublesome short story will be soothed by this collection, which confirms our familiar fantasies of a genteel English life disturbed only by unorthodox visitors and willful pets, a world in which the episodic tale can be launched with an authoritative sentence:

English people don't visit country churches now as they used to when I was young.

I think it is pretty generally admitted that my mother won the last war.

Change of climate will do much.

And when the scene is done with, the story can be closed with an equally precise, to some readers equally satisfying, aphoristic clincher.

There was no need to go on. She had won the war.

The sheets would do to shroud me in. So I went in and bought them.

There are a few pieces in which Miss Warner's reserve of manner and style break down—a great relief. The title story isn't one of her proper stories at all

but a fully rendered description of the back garden of her childhood, and of an odd, overly bright little girl who experiences a moment of transcendence:

... the rubbish heap became a raft, and the ocean where it floated directionless was all around—and I left myself and was gone.

I don't remember what it was like being gone. I remember being startled back by a voice from the house calling me in because it was my bedtime. It was like the raw agony of recovering from frostbite.

I believe it is exceptional to have had only one experience of this sort of thing during a whole childhood.



But I was an unimaginative child—solitary and agnostic as a little cat, and mistrusting other children to a pitch of abhorrence, as cats do.

And from this charged moment spills another memory connected mysteriously to that particular garden alive with paths, fences, boundaries. There, playing with old Major Beldam, a limping, childish fellow who has come to stay, the sly, doubting girl asks to see his wound ("I wanted certainty"), and is rewarded with a view of his varicose ulcer. Thus reality is forced upon her, and it's worse than what can be imagined, more fantastic than their game.

"Interval For Metaphysics" is closer to a personal essay, and again shows Sylvia Townsend Warner to have more than a

clever turn of mind. She is particularly illuminating on the experience of learning to read: "The Word, till then a denominating aspect of the Thing, has suddenly become detached from it and is perceived as a glittering entity..." Sounds and double meanings, the enchantment of the literal, the fresh play of the mind with words, are soon lost:

The word sinks back into the thing, or at best betakes itself to the printed page. The period when one lived in two worlds at once is over. *Perhaps not longer than six months*, I said. When I try to recall it, I cannot retain it for as many minutes.

This subtle intelligence and occasional gift for understatement can be found in another episode, which leans toward parable, "The Young Sailor." A young man sitting in the midst of children during a confirmation ceremony in St. Paul's Cathedral suddenly gets up and goes away, a prefiguring of Miss Warner's own uncomplicated loss of faith.

It is unsettling to read *Scenes of Childhood*: the small talent in evidence here seems smaller still when we think that at the time Sylvia Townsend Warner began to write these reminiscences, in the late twenties and early thirties, the world she clung to had just been so passionately observed and irrevocably revised in the novels of Ford Madox Ford, Virginia Woolf, and Evelyn Waugh. □

IMITATION MODERNISM

BY PERRY MEISEL

*The aesthetic of difficulty
lingers on, though it belongs
to another age*



“WHY DON’T YOU write sensible books that people can understand?” Nora Joyce complained to her husband, James, when he was composing *Finnegans Wake*, in 1927. Joyce’s indirect reply (for he seldom discussed literature with his wife) came in a confession to his publisher, Harriet Weaver, to whom he had been explaining the new book for weeks: “Now, patience; and remember patience is the great thing. . . .” “I want . . . to teach everybody how to do everything properly so as to be in the fashion.”

By “the fashion,” Joyce meant the intricate difficulties of *Finnegans Wake* and how a reader was to negotiate them. Neither the book nor the advice was meretricious. They expressed the conscious, deliberate conditions of Joyce’s art—an art of intentional obscurity, ellipsis, and allusion, one designed to put the reader to school rather than to sleep.

The contemporary reader is accustomed to these Joycean demands on his concentration. Indeed, they have become the values by which we assess and bestow literary reputation in an age still dominated by the achievement of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, and Pound’s *Cantos*. Thick with learning and dense in surface texture, the novels, poems, and critical self-pronouncements of the great moderns more than set a period standard. These works have convinced us that the criteria of difficulty and inaccessibility by which they demand to be judged are universal ones for the judgment of literary art.

Chief among the priests of modernism, Eliot summed up the period aesthetic in 1921, giving it the implicit authority of an “objective” theory of poetry. The italics are Eliot’s own:

Perry Meisel is associate professor of English at New York University, and the author of Thomas Hardy: The Return of the Repressed and The Absent Father: Virginia Woolf and Walter Pater.

We can only say that it appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning.

This description of what a work of literature should do has become an aesthetic tenet. It tends to be the starting point for the young poet or novelist with serious literary ambitions. In fact, it has acquired the character of reflex rather than reflection, of instinct rather than reason. It is, in short, something that ought to make us suspicious. Despite our hesitation to quarrel with it for fear of exposing our intellectual inadequacies, we balk at its demands, consciously or not, even as we acquiesce. We assume too easily that we should at least appreciate what we cannot enjoy.

This assumption has its influential proponents. George Steiner’s 1978 essay “On Difficulty,” probably our most notorious defense of the aesthetic of obfuscation, insists that difficulty is paradigmatic of all literary experience. Steiner argues that an “ecumenism of receptivity” toward past literature is “spurious,” and goes on:

The authentic poet *cannot* make do with the infinitely shop-worn inventory of speech, with the necessarily devalued or counterfeit currency of the every-day. He must literally create new words and syntactic modes: this was the argument and practice of the first Dada, of Surrealists, of the Russian “Futuro-Cubist” Khlebnikov and his “star-speech.” If the reader would follow the poet into the *terra incognita* of revelation, he must learn the language. . . . We are not meant to understand easily and quickly. Immediate purchase is denied us. The text yields its force and singularity of being only gradually.

Steiner’s position represents an exact reversal of what used to be the prevailing attitude. “Trash,” wrote the anonymous reviewer for *The New Monthly* on the publication of Browning’s *Sordello*, in 1840. “If Mr. Browning will write, we wish he would write something comprehensible. *Sordello* is full of hard names,

and nonsense.” Less than a century later, however, in 1932, an anonymous reviewer of W. H. Auden’s *The Orators* declared Auden’s verse “exceedingly difficult to understand, but in spite of this extraordinarily stimulating.” By 1979, Hugh Kenner, Pound’s most authoritative critic, hailed Gilbert Sorrentino’s almost incomprehensible *Mulligan Stew* as a primer in avant-garde aesthetics, and did it in a style almost as gnomic as his mentor’s.

Complicit with this appreciation of unintelligibility is another familiar trait of modern art: its maker’s plea that he is “misunderstood,” that the meaning he’s after—even if it augurs the end or the endless plurality of meaning—is, by its very nature and quality, impossible to fix in any authorized way. That our greatest writers cannot be understood is the whole point, Steiner insists, for no understanding is possible in a world driven mad by the events of the twentieth century: “At certain levels, we are not meant to understand *at all*, and our interpretation, indeed our reading itself, is an intrusion . . .”

Difficulty, then, can even become a strategy intended to disarm all readers, whatever their inclinations, by a sort of trap or double bind. If a work is impenetrable or elusive, there must be something to it. If a work is unreadable, it must be a moving illustration of modernist *angst*. And a good writer, it goes without saying, is one who cannot be readily understood.

AS OUR DISTANCE FROM the moderns begins to widen, it becomes clear that the literary criteria of difficulty and “being misunderstood” add up to little more than the defensive, self-sustaining myth of a period of literature now past. The historical record alone shows how isolated, even embattled, Eliot’s requirement is. The college freshman who thinks Shakespeare difficult soon finds him the soul of lucidity. It is a question of catching on—of learning the idioms of Elizabethan English and spotting the literary and mythological allusions.

By the time of Romanticism, poets themselves were in revolt against classical poetic diction, and went about a housecleaning so thorough that it produced a century whose virtues and vices alike reflected a determined clarity bred by a determined security. The Victorians, after all, were Romantics in action, and the public strength of their litera-

ture reflects it. Except for the Decadence, what we consider great Victorian writing today—Dickens, Trollope, Tennyson, George Eliot, Hardy—was mass-market stuff.

By contrast to what preceded it, then, modernism looks more and more like a special, and specialized, condition of literary culture. Its aesthetic—and its motivations—are far more programmatic in their influence than its protestations of revolt would suggest. Our “post-modern” aesthetic of difficulty takes as its authority the texts of modernism proper—and with no small irony, since modernism’s ineluctable agenda is to be direct and original, to “make it new,” in Pound’s famous words. “The late-comer,” asserted Virginia Woolf, “improves upon the pioneers.”

It was not until well after the Decadence of the nineties had spent itself that the cult of modernist difficulty began to dominate the literary scene in a serious and mature way. The *annus mirabilis* of modernism was 1922. It marked the publication of *Ulysses*, *The Waste Land*, and Virginia Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room*, the first of her post-realist novels. All three works, it should be added, were published by private presses—the latter two by the Woolfs’ Hogarth Press (Virginia set type for Eliot’s poem with her own hands), *Ulysses* by Sylvia Beach’s Paris bookstore and printing establishment, Shakespeare & Co.

That they were privately published is symptomatic of the kinds of difficulty posed by all three works, for they deal, in both form and meaning, with the response of the private soul to the encroachment upon it of mass or public civilization. This sense of crisis provided modern literature with a poetics of difficulty that it could claim was a necessity. Hence the traditional—and by no means false—defense of modern fiction and poetry as a literature whose difficulty replicates on the level of style the modernist’s specific and programmatic intent to represent a world in pieces, devoid of meaning. The reader of Conrad or Kafka experiences the vertigo characteristic of the world they depict in his very attempt to read about it; the reader of Ford Madox Ford’s *The Good Soldier* even discovers that the book’s narrator has been wrong throughout, and that he has heard nothing but lies for hundreds of pages.

In some instances, an elaborate style is simply the reflection of a subject that resists clarity. Henry James is difficult

because what he describes—the circuitry of mind and heart—is complicated. Freud is difficult not only because what he sets out to map—the unconscious mind—is complicated but because it is in our very nature to resist understanding it. And, of course, T. S. Eliot is difficult because one must share the poet’s assumptions about symbols and what they mean if one expects him to cohere. Without Eliot’s own rather mocking notes to *The Waste Land*, the poem will not only not read right; it will barely read at all.

BUT WHAT IN THE early part of the century was a genuinely radical attempt to renovate literary language has devolved into the irony of an institutionalized, even classical kind of post-mod-



ernism. Where Eliot’s reappraisal of Donne and his heirs depended on the criterion of difficulty or “toughness of mind,” there is no such payoff in the case of many of our post-moderns. With William H. Gass, we come to the heart of the problem. Considered by many the most accomplished stylist in America, Gass won fame in 1966 with his novel *Omensetter’s Luck*. Gass’s prose, like Faulkner’s, seemed to be poised between realism and the diction of a modern literature that could elevate regional life, as Joyce had done, to the level of myth. But its real affinities were more literary than vernacular. The novel imitated Faulkner and *Ulysses*—and Samuel Beckett—far better than it captured the spoken idioms of the Midwest. Its highly metaphoric, insistently literary language outstripped its subject, despite Gass’s effort to reproduce the rhythms of

American speech. Gass’s short stories (collected under the title of his most famous, “In the Heart of the Heart of the Country”) turned out to have the same problem: they showed that Gass was more interested in technique than in talk, and had forgotten Joyce’s injunction to realize a world as well as to celebrate the word.

Gass’s writing represents a trend. Among our principal “post-moderns,” it is John Barth who remains our most honored veteran, though just how much he has accomplished would be hard to say. Barth’s career largely rehearses the development of the English novel itself. His early books—*The Floating Opera* and *The End of the Road*—were exercises in discipleship on the order of Keats’s imitation of Spenser or Milton’s Latin sonnets, although the models here were modernist: absurdist drama and existentialism. With *The Sot-Weed Factor* and *Giles Goat-Boy*, Barth became a historian of the English novel—and the English language—as well as a practitioner of it. But despite his greedy inventiveness, he was destined to grow more willfully imitative in the years to come. To be sure, *Chimera* signals a considerable progress in the understanding of language and how it functions, especially compared with the undigested, rather vulgar modernism of *Lost in the Funhouse*. But it wasn’t long before his exuberant inventions gave way to an impulse to instruct us in the nature of narrative instead of simply getting on with it. But we already know how narrative functions—not only from the experiments of modernism but, in a far plainer style, from structural linguistics, psychoanalysis, and French criticism and historiography. And then there is Barth’s *Letters*, full of punnish wisdom about the quest for meaning and its ultimate elusiveness. Even George Steiner had to complain, in a *New Yorker* review of December 31, 1979: “Alas, Pirandello was here first, and with mastery. . . . Barth is out of luck. Titans have been there before him, and on his exact ground.”

ANOTHER VETERAN experimentalist, Gilbert Sorrentino—a more generous, and more genuinely experimental, writer than Barth—found himself, with the publication of *Mulligan Stew*, in 1979, canonized in literary circles virtually overnight. Interviews, dissertations, a three-pound issue of *The Review*

of *Contemporary Fiction* examining him from every angle: it's as though a new "difficultist" hero were required every now and then by the contemporary machinery of taste and arbitration. Sorrentino has too often been associated with those infinitely inferior obscurantists labeled by Hugh Kenner the "schlock avant-garde." It is, however, precisely Sorrentino's ability to provide us with an aerial view of avant-garde writing as a whole that has brought him to prominence; and it is his determination to both mock and emulate the aesthetic of difficulty that makes *Mulligan Stew* such an irritating yet endearing document.

As usual, it is the allusions to modern classics that give the tale away. Like Gide's *The Counterfeiters*, *Mulligan Stew* contains a novel within a novel, and aspires to mirror in its narrative design the incessant revisions we impose on our lives. Like *The Waste Land*, it purports to imitate the chaos of life by presenting us with a puzzle of random pieces, a bric-a-brac of the common and the patrician, the ignorant and the overeducated, held loosely together by the tendrils of innumerable literary modes. And like *Ulysses*, Sorrentino's novel mixes popular and classical forms by having the author's novelist-hero, who is called Ned Beaumont (also the name of one of Dashiell Hammett's creations), write a detective novel that develops into a parody of a "difficult" avant-garde novel. This is surely a step beyond institutionalized avant-gardism, since Sorrentino raises—even if he does not resolve—a question that Barth and Gass overlook entirely: the clash between the popular and the recondite, between the detective novel and the "art novel," between public and private forms. It is the divorce between mass and minority culture, between society and letters, between life and art, that the modernist credo insists upon, and Sorrentino is right to identify it as both the cause and the effect of the aesthetic of difficulty.

THE CRITIC'S GREAT fear, of course, is that he may be missing the point. Yet ours is a very different period from the genuinely revolutionary era in which the classics of modernism were produced. The difference is that our "post-moderns" tell us what we already know. False to its own demand for originality by virtue of its discipleship to an earlier canon, post-modern difficulty is a contradiction. How, indeed, can you make some-

thing new by copying something old?

If we must still look to the moderns for our answers (the post-moderns surely won't provide any), let us at least choose Joyce's vision instead of Eliot's. The Joycean spirit of openness to society that is evident in Leopold Bloom's gregarious sociability is, of course, inimical to a view of the modern world as a wasteland. And it remains the only sensible—and civilized—vision of modernity. The intricate texture of Joyce's language, unlike the texture of Eliot's, is derived from a loving attentiveness to the world of everyday life—a world modernism too often disdains. The adventure of difficult style grows hollow when it represents a retreat from the quotidian, and exposes the failure of the modern imagination rather than of the modern world. □

SHORT REVIEWS



ORDEAL BY FIRE by James M. McPherson. Knopf, \$29.95. In his history of the Civil War and Reconstruction, Professor McPherson has accomplished what one is tempted to describe as a miracle. He goes back to 1800 to explain the social, political, and economic developments leading up to the war, proceeds to the intricate maneuvers, civil and military, of the war itself, and continues through the tangle of interests and influences that brought Reconstruction and black progress to a whimpering end in 1894. He does all this in a little over 600 pages of lucid, lively text. It is an extraordinary feat of organization and condensation and definitely the book for any reader wishing to understand the Civil War in all its aspects and effects.

HUNGER OF MEMORY by Richard Rodriguez. Godine, \$13.95. Ricardo Rodriguez, the small son of Mexican immigrants to California, was thrown straight into a Catholic school, where the nuns instantly Anglicized his name. To be Ricardo at home and Richard at school gave Mr. Rodriguez a sharp awareness of the difference between private and public life, an awareness that persisted through what turned out to be a highly successful academic career, for academic advancement took him steadily

further away from his parents. The process culminated in a family Christmas dinner at which his father spoke to him precisely once. The author is aware that his experience of lost intimacy is not unique but rather the common lot of children, immigrant or native-born, who acquire an education well above the level of their parents' schooling. In his case, loss of contact with his whole Mexican heritage gave the situation an added poignancy. Mr. Rodriguez's account of his education is not presented as a complaint. It is an intelligent, often moving reflection on the private cost of public success in a field where that question is seldom raised. It took courage to write this memoir.

HEART PAYMENTS by Gerald Jay Goldberg. Viking, \$13.95. The principal ingredients of this pseudo-mystery are a neglected artist, a missing Rembrandt, and a private investigator whose specialty is retrieving stolen art works. The artist makes ambiguous collages, which presumably is why the novel's action jumps back and forth in a random fashion over a period of twenty years. This arrangement tempts the reader to make chronological lists of the episodes. The temptation should be resisted. Chronology has nothing to do with the author's real purpose, which turns out to be the creation of amusing, malicious, bawdy vignettes of Californian *vie bohème*. The reading is fun; the mystery is a red herring.

OF VIRTUE RARE by Linda Simon. Houghton Mifflin, \$12.95. The subtitle, "Margaret Beaufort, Matriarch of the House of Tudor," promises a biography, but not enough is known about Lady Margaret to provide a biography in the usual sense. For far too much of the time, Ms. Simon can only guess what her subject thought or felt or even did. She makes up for this deficiency of material with much quotation from anonymous antique versifiers and a capsule account of the Wars of the Roses. The book may be useful as a concise history, strictly from the Tudor side, of a confused period. As a biography, it is a disappointment.

A NEW NATION by Thomas Boylston Adams. Globe Pequot, \$14.95. As former president of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Mr. Adams has access to a great deal of detail—significant or bi-

zarre—about the American past. He uses his information skillfully in these short essays on the development of what he considers the national character, formed by areas and influences extending far from New England. The writing is delightful, shifting unexpectedly from an almost eighteenth-century formality to irreverent colloquialism. The facts have a similar unpredictability. Who except Mr. Adams would consider the importance of Joseph Warren's wig pins?

MURDER AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE by *T. E. B. Clarke*. *St. Martin's*, \$9.95. It is Mr. Clarke's naughty notion that a Buckingham Palace housemaid was murdered a few days before George V's Silver Jubilee, presenting dreadful procedural, not to mention ethical, problems to the police. It would hardly do, would it, for the public to view the royal celebration in the knowledge that a murderer was loose on the royal premises? The dourly funny cover-up and the frantic hunt are neatly merged.

MONUMENTA BRITANNICA by *John Aubrey*. *Little, Brown*, \$125.00. Aubrey, the seventeenth-century magpie pre-historian remembered for the holes he discovered at Stonehenge, left a manuscript on British antiquities in general. He left it in such a mess that John Fowles, in the admirable and admiring essay on Aubrey that introduces this facsimile of the material, describes it as a "wild undergrowth." Mr. Fowles, as the reader will quickly discover, has understated the situation. Aubrey lived before archaeology and anthropology were recognized, when etymology was a possibility only dimly perceived, and when history and folklore cheerfully shared a pew. Curious in all these unmapped fields, uncertain what might or might not finally be relevant, Aubrey simply threw into his notes everything he found, heard, or collected from sympathetic correspondents, plus Latin quotations for future ornament. Even with the extensive annotations and translations provided by Rodney Legg and Mr. Fowles, the confusion is stupefying. It is also intriguing, for Aubrey's deductions, given the sources available to him, were shrewd, while his constant travel in search of stone circles and Roman campsites led to the more or less accidental inclusion of contemporary social detail. Hardly everybody's book, or anybody's book to read straight through, but a fas-

cinating grab bag of information for the right audience.

THE MURDER OF NAPOLEON by *Ben Weider and David Hapgood*. *Congdon & Lattès*, \$14.95. Many people, beginning with Napoleon himself, have considered his death suspicious. Recently the research of Sten Forshufvud, a Swedish dentist with an interest in both the emperor and poisons, established beyond doubt that Bonaparte was deliberately murdered. The authors of this book go a step further. Working with Dr. Forshufvud, they undertake to discover who managed the murder. Since Mr. Weider and Mr. Hapgood have gone to great trouble to construct their account of Napoleon's last days and Dr. Forshufvud's investigation in the manner of a mystery story, concealing the poisoner's identity as long as possible, it would be unfair to reveal anything of their work beyond the simple fact that it is mightily interesting if not, in the end, totally convincing. There remains one small possibility that the authors never consider.

THE ANNOTATED HUCKLEBERRY FINN by *Mark Twain*, edited with an introduction, notes, and bibliography by *Michael Patrick Hearn*. *Clarkson N. Potter*, \$25.00. Does Huckleberry Finn, original illustrations and all, really need elaborate marginal exegesis? It seems that he does, for Mr. Hearn himself, having earnestly tracked down the exact nature of a "blanket overcoat," assumes that money sewn into the lining necessarily implies a lack of pockets. Scholarly innocence can touch the funnybone if not the heart.

INTRUSIONS by *Hilary Evans*. *Routledge & Kegan Paul*, \$12.95. Since the inexplicable persists in happening now and again, a consideration of society's changing attitudes toward the paranormal seems a reasonable project, but the result, in this survey, does not accomplish much. In the course of three centuries, society's attitude toward anything (including what goes bump in the night) is pretty certain to shift, while the paranormal remains inexplicable.

THE KENNEDY IMPRISONMENT by *Garry Wills*. *Atlantic-Little, Brown*, \$14.95. Portions of this book originally appeared in *The Atlantic*, in somewhat different form.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

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THE ATLANTIC PUZZLER

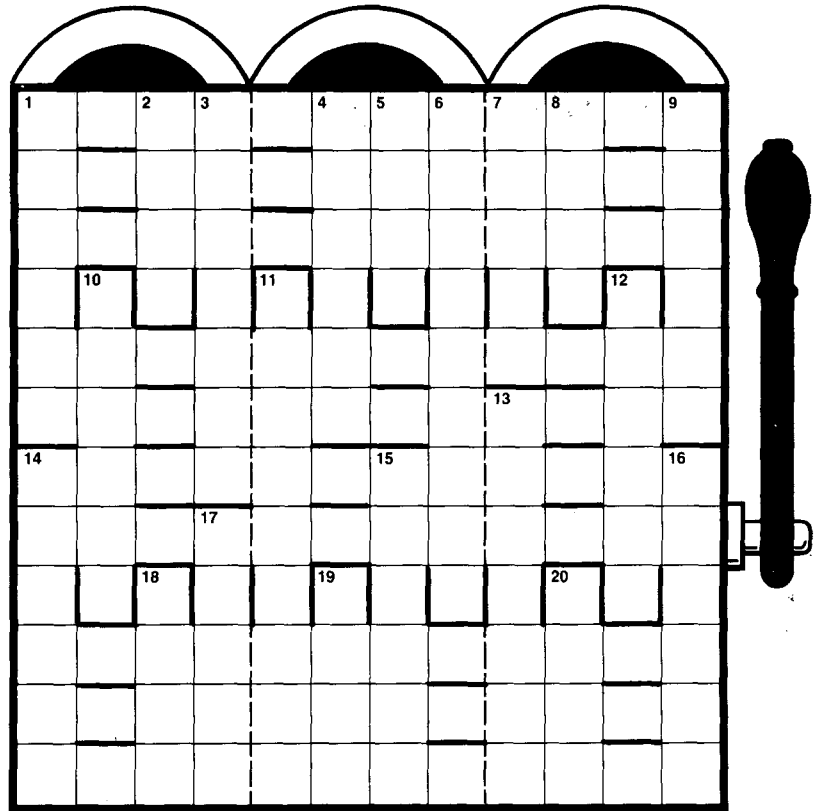
BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

ONE-ARMED BANDIT

(Acknowledgments to
Apex of *The Listener*)

Solvers are offered ten turns (lettered a-j) at the slot machine. A turn may result in three different four-letter words, a two-word combination of four and eight letters, or a twelve-letter jackpot word. When two or three words result, their clues are strung together in random order with no overlap and no intervening words. Down clues are normal. Answers include two proper nouns and a variant spelling at 18D. Punctuation may be used deceptively.

*The solution to last month's
Puzzler appears on page 79.*



ACROSS

- a. Turn is up to try luck with spinning toy fruit
- b. Screwball riot with the likes of The Three Stooges, uncouth rascal, and cowboy?
- c. Combination of salt with iodine—an operation utilizing seawater
- d. Heartless scoundrel and lecher wantonly use a Biblical man made dizzy from alcohol
- e. Rifleman with good aim notes owl
- f. Poe's turned in, sound asleep across cushions of antique couch
- g. Arrange for a certain outcome when Ruby wears favorite fur
- h. Hatter and hole-digger, taking sick, shut up with circus barker?

- i. Lady who's mounted search in lake at three points
- j. Upright, well-bred male, being curious, sees girl's requests

DOWN

1. Unemployed, wearing shortstop's sneaks (6)
2. In leaps, Evel vaulted part of a church (4)
3. Daring display in underwear—topless fur shown in Virginia (7)
4. Tree found in no southern states (6)
5. Split money from users (4)
6. Cross up in carriages for some magicians' helpers? (9)
7. Complete Coast Guard boat with no front (5)
8. A pupil may be seen in this bloomer (4)
9. Rodney's flying over there (6)
10. Gray material that's mined on land (6)
11. At first, measurement in rum recipe is approximate (9)
12. Governess expected Ms. Landers back (6)
13. Penetrates ciphers by a prophet (7)
14. Straightened up mess from discharges (6)
15. Streep unexpectedly fades (6)
16. Set broken leg, having guidance (6)
17. Do almost without rations (5)
18. Swing around swamp (4)
19. Bugs tans poorly (4)
20. Furnished a period of penitence (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, write to The Atlantic Reprint Department, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass. 02116, enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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Reg: 8 mg "tar," 0.6 mg nicotine—Men: 7 mg "tar," 0.5 mg nicotine—100's Reg: 9 mg "tar," 0.7 mg nicotine—100's Men: 10 mg "tar," 0.8 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Mar'81

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